Norbert Elias & Violence

Edited by Tatiana Savoia Landini
& François Dépelteau

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Tatiana Savoia Landini and François Dépelteau

This book is one of those unintended effects that come from a chain of unpredictable events. Our original plan was a book on Norbert Elias discussing both his theoretical approach and his empirical research that used figurational and/or processual sociology. What was supposed to be a single project became two books—*Norbert Elias and Social Theory* and *Norbert Elias and Empirical Research*—after we received more interesting contributions than we expected. The idea of this book on violence came a few months after the publication of the first two books. Even if many chapters in the latter discussed the issue of violence in many ways, we felt there was still some room for a book on Elias's views on violence. It turned out our guess was a good one. So we ended up with something like a short, unplanned book series on Norbert Elias and social theory, empirical research and violence. For now, this third

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one is supposed to be the last, but, as Elias showed so well throughout his processual sociology, this is social life in all its complexity, with all its tensions and unpredictability.

Like other great sociological approaches or theories, Elias's work has many paradoxes, gaps and polemical or unclear definitions for debate. One of those paradoxes is that even if violence is at the core of his study of (de)civilizing processes, Elias didn't really write much specifically on this central notion. This relative silence—or this neglect?—is not without consequences as far as discussions of his work are concerned, especially because Elias often proposed explanations showing tensions between opposite attitudes (such as involvement and detachment), tendencies (like civilizing and decivilizing processes) or forces (interdependent individuals or groups involved in evolving relations of power, for instance). And like many other great thinkers who worked on various topics and who had numerous readers, Elias adapted his views in one way or another to deal with different subjects or to react to particular criticisms. As relevant as it can be, this type of evolving thinking paves the way for long discussions on the "right" interpretation of his explanations. Elias had a long career shaped by important social events, such as the two world wars. His thinking and his perception of the world was certainly affected by the passing of time and by the figurations he was immersed in.

The goal of our previous two edited volumes on Norbert Elias was to be a space for discussion open to many competing interpretations or developments, as long as they were sufficiently justified and improved our knowledge of Elias´s figurational and/or processual sociology. This one, on violence, is no different. In this spirit, we are more interested in working with—or on—Elias rather than claiming to provide The Truth about what he meant or did not mean, even if—of course—one cannot really work on or with Elias without interpreting his texts. Besides, we were not seeking to corroborate or refute any theory. We were more interested in discovering the possibilities and the limits of Elias's sociology, improving it by confronting it and combining it with other concepts or approaches, and/or applying it to multiple empirical social processes.

In terms of structure, the book is divided into three parts. Generally speaking, the first part (Chaps. 2 and 3) can be seen as an introduction to the views of Elias on violence. The second part (Chaps. 4, 5, 6 and 7) consists of discussions of the strengths and the limitations of these views in relation to various social processes, and proposals are made to improve Elias's approach and explanations. The last part (Chaps. 8, 9 and 10) connects

Elias's views on violence to social dynamics resulting from violent conflicts. One should keep in mind that these three parts are not hermetic ones. In other words, Chaps. 2 and 3 contain some discussions on the strengths and limitations of Elias's ideas; Chap. 5 presents the general views of Elias on violence although the main focus is on discussing their limitations and supplementary concepts to his theory; and so on. Generally speaking, the first part introduces the views of Elias, the second part discusses their possibilities, limitations and possible improvements, and the third part focuses on post-conflict processes.

The first two chapters highlight some of the most important ideas of Elias on violence. While the remaining chapters do the same in one way or another, these two help us to clarify what the main issues are. In chapter 2, T.S. Landini notes one important paradox in Elias's work: he wrote a lot about violence all his life, and at the same time he avoided writing about violence. Indeed, we do not have any text from him specifically on violence until later in his career, even if this topic is central to his work. His views on violence have been quite controversial. For sympathetic readers, Elias offered many explanations of violence in modernity. For others, he neglected the importance of violence in our civilization. According to Landini, the last critique has some merit, but this is mostly due to the fact that Elias focused mostly on processes of pacification in his famous theory of the civilizing process. She also adds that it should be remembered that these "are never-ending *processes* of pacification", which implies that violence is never eradicated in Elias's views of civilizations. Landini also sets out the argument that most readers looking for Elias's views on violence use both *The Civilizing Process* and *The Germans* as key references. Landini uses a relatively unknown book that Elias wrote at the end of his life—*Humana Conditio*—to shed some light on completing these discussions. In brief, Elias presents wars (and therefore violence) as a human condition, as something that will continue to happen. We are dealing with the fears of a global nuclear catastrophe here, in the context of the end of the so-called Cold War. Elias had some hopes, though, related to the vague possibility of a global monopolization of legitimate violence in the hands of the United Nation and also a vague possibility that human kind would learn the hard way, going through big wars, perhaps a nuclear war. In this chapter, Landini also presents the three levels (individual, national and international) of the civilizing process theory, introducing Elias's incorporation of Sigmund Freud's theory to problematize this discussion.

The third chapter provides an illustration of Elias's ideas on violence. İ. Özgören Kinli uses the movie *Time of the Wolf,* directed by Michel Haneke, to discuss how some kinds of violent processes can be analyzed using Elias's concepts and how it can be done. The notion of a decivilizing process, which will be also discussed in other chapters, is a central one in this chapter. Indeed, the movie tells the story of a family trying to survive in a post-apocalyptic era where the habits, feelings, manners, tastes and configurations of a "civilized" society have basically collapsed. Violence is once again centre stage. Life can be lost quickly and for the slightest of reasons, new survival units become central, and social identities are redefined as well as relationships between the newly established and outsiders. Like other specialists such as Fletcher (1997) and Dunning and Mennell (1996), İ. Özgören Kinli shows how Elias's approach to the civilizing process also offers explanations of the potential or real reversal of a civilizing process. She also shows how Elias's concepts can be used to analyze artistic productions like movies—productions which could be more difficult to understand otherwise.

The next four chapters deal with a central question in Elias's work and of our time: What is the relationship between our civilization and violence? According to some, violence—whether physical or symbolic—is a key feature of our time (see Alexander 2013; Arendt 1973; Bauman 1989; Wieviorka 2009). Elias saw one civilizing process as characterized by a decrease of (physical) violence coming with processes such as habitus transformations and the emergence of a central power monopolizing the use of legitimate violence. In this logic, at the national level at least, the use of open violence is morally and generally condemned, and it leaves the centre stage of our social order to be practised in backstage spaces such as prisons or hidden torture rooms. Elias also added that decivilizing processes can occur. As we will see in some chapters, those processes are basically understood as reversed civilizing processes. The authors of Chaps. 4, 5, 6 and 7 propose different ideas related to distinct social dynamics, but in one way or another and like others before (Burkitt 1996; Dépelteau et al. 2013), they all support the thesis that the relationship between our civilization and violence is ambivalent or paradoxical. None of them reject Elias's ideas; they rather propose to work on them in order to integrate this ambivalence.

The first part of Chap. 4, by F. Delmotte and C. Majastre, stays closer to Elias's theses than the chapters forming the second part of the book. Their focus is on the formation of the modern state and the related

process of monopolization of violence. They accept the Eliasian idea that, overall, the level of violence has decreased in "civilized countries" thanks to the formation of the modern state. However, they consider that Elias was somehow "hesitant" on issues related to our ambivalent relationships to violence, or that there are some "tensions" in his work in relation to these issues. More precisely, they highlight the fact that violence is still present in the civilizing process (and the work of Elias) through three main social problems: at the international level, state formation implies multiple violent conflicts between these states; a "normal" civilizing process also comes with "symbolic and psychological" violence; and finally, civilizing processes also imply the possibility of decivilizing processes, like the Nazi regime in Germany. Later in the chapter, the authors emphasize the importance of the near-collapse of the "generalized human 'mutual identification'"—as something like an ethical dimension of a civilizing process—to an understanding of the decivilizing processes, in particular the Nazi one, as it is the loss of this identification that paved the way for the destruction of the Jews by the Nazis. In sum, Delmotte and Majastre underline that the state's monopoly of violence remains an ambiguous innovation and that Elias's sociology provides instruments to investigate the conditions under which the state can play opposing roles in matters of violence and *civilité*. The authors allege at the end that *civilité* cannot be simply defined as the opposite of "violence" based on Elias's work. Especially in late political essays such as "Changes in the 'we-I' Balance" (Elias 2010), Elias even invites us to think of *civilité* and civilization apart from or beyond the (nation) state, in association with a global self-detachment process and the growing importance of a generalized human mutual identification.

The next three chapters are more oriented towards some proposed modifications of the Eliasian approach. In Chap. 5, Dépelteau argues that Elias's approach does not fully integrate the ambivalence of modernity towards violence. According to him, Elias's work is very useful for understanding the relative pacification of core societies (such as modern France and Great Britain) in their territories. However, it fails to explain how violence is still a central and permanent dynamic in the difficult reproduction of modern social orders. In other words, we cannot understand "pacified" societies in Europe without integrating this high level of violence which is prevalent in larger configurations. Empirical examples from colonization and writings or speeches by "civilized" people (like J. Ferry and Tocqueville) are used to support this thesis. We see that the

use of violence is a central issue which creates many tensions (not only theoretical ones) in modernity. Dépelteau defends the argument that modernity is ambivalent towards the use of open and extreme violence. In this sense, Elias's ideas around the notion of decivilizing processes would not be adequate to deal with this paradox or this ambiguity. It hides the fact that open and extreme violence did and can come from and with the modern civilizing process. It is not necessarily the result of the reversal of this civilizing process. Dépelteau suggests completing the explanations of Elias with other dimensions and concepts that would expose the violent dimension of civilization. In order to do this, other key social processes of this civilization, such as the colonizing processes, should be included.

In some ways, the sixth chapter can be seen as being part of the same family as the third one. J. de Souza and W. Marchi Junior present a hypothetical framework to analyze processes and effects of civilizing processes at the periphery of core societies like France, the United Kingdom and Portugal. Here again, the importance of colonization is crucial. They use the case of Brazilian society as an example and a source of inspiration. In brief, they argue that one civilizing process cannot simply be exported to other countries. Modern civilization not only spread to other parts of the world simply by imitation, even if imitation was obviously part of the colonizing process. Like any other process, the civilizing process of Brazil was a specific one, and we need distinct concepts to cope adequately with it. In other words, one should not understand Elias's approach as a universal theory of civilizing processes as if all civilizing processes would work in the same way. Each case is unique and calls for distinct concepts even if we can identify types of civilizing processes like the ones happening at the core of the global world, and those happening at the periphery. However, according to the authors, Elias is still relevant to an understanding of some aspects of the Brazilian case, but it has to be adapted to specificities of processes of modernization happening at the periphery. Therefore, de Souza and Marchi Junior suggest combining Elias's theory with the work of Brazilian sociologist Jessé Souza, who is himself influenced by Taylor and Bourdieu. In doing so, de Souza and Marchi Junior suggest regarding the Brazilian civilizing process as a case of "selective modernization", where the production of a "riffraff" (poor and marginalized people living in *favela*s, for instance) is a central characteristic of this social order. In brief, these people do not have the necessary (primary and secondary) habitus to be successful and favoured

by the modern state and the competitive market, and they can resort to violence as an "existential cry".

In the seventh chapter, K. Letteney insists on the central place violence has in the USA. He highlights the fact that the American civilizing process has been closely associated with violence since its beginning and until today—for instance against Aboriginal people, through the counter-attacks of the state against terrorists (supposedly done to protect our "civilization"), and through interpersonal violence such as mass shootings. Building on the concepts of Elias and some ideas of Mennell (from his book *The American Civilizing Process*), Letteney proposes explanations of this relatively high level of American violence at the international and national levels. For example, at the international level, the Americans have developed some habitus favouring the use of violence in their attempts to establish a global monopoly of violence. Like the control of fire in an earlier age, the use of new technologies—such as drones—also plays a crucial role in this process by facilitating destructive actions. At the national level, and more than the availability of guns, the competitiveness of the society and its related social frustrations fuel instrumental violence, according to Letteney. The author shows that in these processes, specific American cultural traits have been associated with this history of violence, which include: "America's deeply held belief of 'standing one's ground,' free-market competition, hyper-masculinity, rugged individualism, and an exceptional self-image". In parallel, we assist at some decivilizing trends, such as: "signs of a gradual breakdown in the state apparatus and a growing distrust within marginalized communities of the state's authority to use violence". K. Letteney explains other social phenomena related to some decivilizing trends in America; but in brief and once again, the relationship of civilized society with violence is shown to be paradoxical.

As mentioned above, the last three chapters deal with post-conflict social phenomena. To our knowledge, this kind of process has been explored by very few Elias specialists. In Chap. 8, G. Visoka announces that he "explores the complementarity between Elias's figurational sociology of violence and post-conflict state-building studies". State-building studies analyze the reconstruction of states and security after violent conflicts. In this logic, the contemporary state-building practices of the United Nations and regional organizations are seen as an attempt to govern (and civilize) internal conflicts happening in a global figuration composed of various civilizing and decivilizing trends. Like other authors in this book, G. Vesoka starts from Elias and works with his concepts

in order to deal with original and specific processes. His processes are different from what Elias studied in Europe because they are global ones. In this respect, he insists on the fact that the attempts to civilize human relations are not internal processes. They are external ones since they come from international or regional organizations. They are also oriented by specific worldviews (coming from the outside). As he wrote: "they are rooted in the Eurocentric and Weberian notion of state-building". These attempts to civilize specific parts of the world are also attempts to impose liberal democracies. As such, they come with the promotion of individual rights, but also with the disqualification of trouble-makers and new forms of "collective and individual self-restraint". These state-building processes are complex figurations born of the interactions of "multiple international and local actors"; and like other figurations, they produce unintended effects such as "'peace-breaking' and 'state-weakening' dynamics". The dynamics are complex ones, and they are unpredictable.

In Chap. 9, M. Bucholc proposes an Eliasian (figurational) approach to the study of the construction of memories of violence. This type of research has become more and more important since the second half of the twentieth century. Her examples come from Central and Eastern Europe, a part of the world that is characterized by many traumatizing violent conflicts. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the integrations into larger entities that followed have fuelled various dynamics associated with violence and the (re)construction of memories of violence. Overall, Bucholc starts from Elias's concept of memory (as derived from his symbol theory) to discuss processes of relations between established people and outsiders related to commemorations of violence. For instance, she defends the argument that remembering past violent events is closely related to power relations between established and outsider groups. Power relations do affect the constructions of memories, and the constructions of memories do affect power relations. These explanations conclude with a discussion showing that memory construction and the commemoration of violence are also part of the civilizing process. Overall, this figurational approach allows one to gain "a more comprehensive view of social memory of violence, both in CEE and elsewhere".

In the last chapter, A. Behrouz connects democratic political life to the civilizing process. He uses the example of the failure of the Iranian Constitutional Monarchy (1906–1925) to defend the thesis that the

practice and possibility of parliamentary democracy requires from politicians a kind of self-control that comes with the civilizing process, one that was not present in Iran. In this logic, figurational explanations of the success or the failure of processes of democratization do not rely only or too much on institutional or cultural analyses, but the Eliasian concept of "habitus" becomes a central one. In order to live in a democratic regime, certain codes of conduct are required among politicians. For instance, the individual capacity to restrain violent political behaviours is crucial, and this individual capacity is related to larger social and state-formation processes. More precisely, one has to study the interconnections between the personality structure, the social structure and the state structure. For example, politicians have to internalize the structures of democratic institutions while these institutions require democratic behaviours from the same politicians. This type of democratic dialectic is possible only when there are some forms of compatibility and continuities at the social and state levels. This was never the case in Iran and many other societies struggling with democracy, where "people who have been raised and educated under authoritarian, military and violent conditions usually think in terms of simple dualisms such as enemy/friend or black/white", for instance. This is one of the key advantages of the Eliasian notion of habitus over the typical concept of culture, according to the author: it is designed to be more dynamic or processual than static.

We hope this brief panorama of *Norbert Elias and Violence* may encourage the reader to study the book and thus realize the many possibilities and creative uses and reflections engendered by Elias's approach and analysis.

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PART I

An Introduction to Elias's Views on Violence

CHAPTER 2

War, Hope and Fear: Writings on Violence at the End of a Long Life

Tatiana Savoia Landini

1 Introduction

"The violent disputes between people, which we call wars, have been a part of the fate of human beings, of their constitution of life." Elias lived through both the First and the Second World Wars. During the First World War, when he was just 18 years of age, he was called to the front after spending six months training in Russia. He emigrated from Germany a little before the beginning of the Second World War. He went to France where he was unable to continue his career. From there he went to England, where he spent the war years living a very simple life, with little money. His days were spent at the British Library, studying and writing.

War. "Human-made sorrow, human-made horror." He lost his father, and then his mother in the concentration camps. He was taken to the Isle of Man, where German Jews living on English soil were taken during the Second World War, and was forced to stay there for 8 months.[1]

"Human beings have made the reciprocal murdering of peoples a permanent institution." Elias wrote about violence—and at the same time avoided writing about violence—all his life. The concept of violence, as well as the concepts of civilization and civilizing processes, plays a very important, albeit very controversial, role in Elias´s *oeuvre*. Some criticize

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him for not paying enough attention to violence and, more specifically, to the violence implied in civilizing processes. By focusing on *pacification* as an important direction of the civilizing process, Elias would have missed key aspects of this same civilizing process, such as violent processes of colonization, development of mass-murder weapons to be used in wars between and within states, and so on (e.g. Bauman 1989; Burkitt 1996; Dépelteau et al. 2013; Malesevic and Ryan 2012). Other authors, in contrast, reinforce the key role played by violence during state-formation processes, the possibility of decivilizing processes or spurts, changes in the balance between external constraint towards self-constrain, and so on (e.g. Dunning 2011; Dunning and Mennell 1996; Spierenburg 2001; Mennell 1990, 1995; Fletcher 1997).

The concepts of violence and civilization—and the relationship between them—are not discussed in a definitive way in any of Elias's books or texts, opening up many of these interpretations and debates. The *Civilizing Process* is still Elias's most widely read and discussed book, the one that raises the most heated debates. *The Germans* is also relevant to discussions of violence and decivilizing processes. But there is another book that is more or less ignored, from which the opening statements of the first three paragraphs of this Introduction are taken: *Humana Conditio.*

At the end of his life, Elias wrote at least two texts about war and our attitude towards it. Both in *Humana Conditio* ([1985] 2010) and in *Has hope a future?* ([1986] 2008b), we see an Elias afraid of a great threat to humanity, a possible nuclear war between what were by then the world's two most powerful countries, the United States and Russia. In his view, it was a time of extreme danger, when international conflicts were very acute and a major war could break out. Even so, Elias made sure to express his hope for a more united and less unequal world in both texts:

> It would undoubtedly be a fine thing if, without that bitter experience, nations and their leading politicians were to do what those left behind after it [a major war] would do: work diligently and steadfastly over generations towards a pacified world society with diminishing inequalities. ([1986] 2008b, p. 268)

Humana Conditio was first published in German in 1985 and has its origins in a lecture given by Elias at the University of Bielefeld in May of that year. The lecture marked the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Alan and Brigitte Scott (2010), who present this text

for the *Collected Works of Norbert Elias*, published by UCD Press, advise the reader that "In some ways, *Humana Conditio* may appear more seriously dated than many of the Elias's other writings" (p. xiv). This view is shared by Arthur W. Frank (2010), who wrote a review of this book for the *Canadian Journal of Sociology*. Apart from references in articles on International Relations and related issues (e.g. Delmotte 2012; Linklater 2012; Mennell 2012 and 2015), *Humana Conditio* seems to be a piece that lies forgotten in library basements.

Indeed, the discussion raised there is in some ways outdated. Although writing at the sunset of the Cold War, he fails to see its end. As van Benthem van den Bergh (2012) recalls, Elias "believed the chance of nuclear was greater than the end of hegemonic rivalry that dominated postwar development". His fears, very fortunately for all of us, have not been realized, and the book is undeniably outdated.

Nevertheless, it produces some interesting insights for discussion—or maybe a rethink—of violence, war and civilizing processes from Elias's perspective. The most important statement, in my view, repeated a number of times through its hundred pages or so, is that war is a human condition. Not an accident that happened during history, not an isolated incident. A human condition. One that results from human actions and interactions but, nevertheless, one that happened and will possibly continue to happen indefinitely.

Texts written with the aim of discussing violence in Elias's *oeuvre*, surprisingly enough, seldom take into account *Humana Conditio*. An exclusive focus on *The Civilizing Process* and *The Germans* may generate incorrect statements—at least to my view—like the one we find in Malesevic and Ryan (2012, p. 177): "Rather than seeing warfare as an integral component of the Civilizing Process—one of the crucial constituents of modernity as we know it—Elias sees it as a temporary 'regression to barbarism'".

It is not my intention to examine whether Elias's thinking and theory changed over his 60 years of academic life—a discussion that I find meaningless and pointless. Writers are expected to change their mind, improve their perception, develop their concepts, on so on, with the passing of time. It is important to be aware of these changes in order to improve our understanding of the theory. In this connection, the first aim of this chapter is very simple: to connect the discussion in *The Civilizing Process* with the one found in *Humana Conditio* as well as other texts published towards the end of his life, in the 1980s. A discussion on Freud's influence

on Elias is added for the sake of discussing violence at the individual level. From there, I will raise some issues about how to connect the three levels of the civilizing processes—the individual, the national and the international ones—always having violence as a "problematizing issue".

2 The Civilizing Processes and Its Three Levels: Individual, National and International

The Civilizing Process is a book about long-term changes at two interconnected levels, the individual and the social. How those changes happened and what the forces or the drives behind them were are the questions that Elias seeks to answer throughout the book. My goal here is not to summarize or give a full reading of the book,[2] but simply to pick out some discussions that are important for the present text.

The long analysis in the third part of *The Civilizing Process* shows the process of state formation from the Middle Ages up to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From antiquity to feudalism kingdoms tended to disintegrate, forming small territories controlled by a weakened central power, when centrifugal forces predominated. This was followed by state-formation processes, when centripetal forces prevailed: the tendency was towards the agglomeration of smaller units into more extensive ones, dominated by a stronger central power. Three different mechanisms were in action at this time: (1) the monopolist mechanism (increasing centralization of the means of legitimate violence and taxation at the hands of one person who legislates and manages each territory, and the increase of the size of the territory through competition); (2) royal mechanism (more stable monopolies implied more power for the Crown, leading to the absolute monarchies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries); and (3) change from private to public monopolies (when the centralized and monopolized control over the wealth of a few people falls into the hands of many and finally becomes a function of an interdependency network) (Elias 2000; Mennell 1998, pp. 61–79).

In other words, Elias explains state formation from a sociological perspective, which involves the monopolization of both the legitimate means of violence and taxation.[3] This process is related to another long-term one: changes in personality structure. The chapter "On changes in aggressiveness" (in Part II) is important for an understanding of the connection between state-formation processes and changes at the individual

level, the connection between social structure and the structure of affects. In a society with a weak central power, nothing can compel people to exercise restraint. But conditions for self-restraint change if the "power of the central authority grows, if over a larger or smaller area the people are *forced to live in peace with each other*, the moulding of affects and the standards of the drive economy are very gradually changed as well" (Elias 2000, p. 169). At the same pace, the reserve and "mutual consideration" of people also increase. The discharge of affects in physical attacks becomes restricted to certain temporal and spatial enclaves. Once the monopoly of physical power has passed to central authorities, physical attacks are reserved for those legitimized by the central authority or, in exceptional cases, those who have the legitimacy to fight against enemies (internal or external), in times of war or revolution (Elias 2000, p. 169). In short, there is an intimate connection between the internalization of restraints and the consequent transformations in behavioural codes and in the division of labour, demographic shifts, processes of societal pacification, urbanization, and the growth of trade and the money economy (sociogenesis) (Quilley and Loyal 2004, p. 10).

For Elias, there were some obvious directions in the European process of civilization—the one that is discussed in the book. The main ones are: a shift in the balance between constraint by others and self-restraint; the development of a social standard of behaviour and feeling that generates the emergence of a more even, all-round, stable and differentiated self-restraint; and an increase in the scope of mutual identification between people (Fletcher 1997, p. 82). In addition to these three directions, the civilizing process also involved: increasing pressure for foresight and self-constraint; processes of psychologization and rationalization; advances in the threshold of shame and repugnance; a reduction in the contrasts in conduct between the upper and the lower groups and an increase in varieties or nuances of civilized conduct; and changes in human knowledge from a more involved to a more detached perspective (Elias 2000).

The Civilizing Process is clearly not a book focused on violence and war—Elias describes both the centripetal and the centrifugal forces implied in the formation of modern nation states, but not the many wars that happened in Europe during the same period. Although colonization is mentioned, the violent processes of conquering lands and imposing a different culture and language on peoples are only discussed in passing. In this respect, it is clearly not a book about violence or war; it is a book

about pacification, about the processes of social and individual pacification *resulting* from long-term processes—some of which imply wars and violence. And, in this regard, it would be correct to say that Elias overlooks the destruction wreaked on other survival units—continents, countries, tribes, and so on—in this process.

In Elias's understanding, the process of civilization involves a reduction in physical violence and aggression, both at the interpersonal and internal national levels. To substantiate this argument, Elias offers an explanatory model for social pacification. The monopolization of violence and taxation at the hands of the State favoured pacification in the long term—at least in European countries, as well as a number of others. This pacification process occurs at two levels: inside the nation state, the level of violence between people is reduced; at the same time, at the level of personality structure, the taboo against acts of violence increases. With time, people develop a certain reluctance, loathing or disgust towards the use of physical violence (Elias [1981] 1988, p. 180).

Although he does consider the wars and violence implied in the process of changing monopolies from private to public, Elias's focus is on pacification. He does not describe wars or violent conflicts in detail and is not interested in describing the number of people killed or wounded; he is more interested in the result. Understanding how people can live together in peace is what astonishes him:

> In striving to examine the problem of physical violence in the social life of human beings, people often ask the wrong sort of questions. It is usual to ask how is it possible that people within a society can physically strike or kill others—how, for example, can they become terrorists? It would better fit the facts and thus be more fruitful if the question were differently phrased. It should rather read, how is it possible that so many people can normally live together peacefully, without fear of being attacked or killed by people stronger than themselves, as is nowadays largely the case in the great state-societies of Europe, America, China or Russia? (Elias 1996, p. 174)

The pacification process is not a unilineal one, nor is it finished, irreversible or homogeneous at every level. At the international level, says Elias, we are on the same path as tribes were a long time ago: every state is a threat to every other state. Besides, the monopoly of violence is two-faced. From the point of view of the population, it can mean the internal pacification of a country. But the monopoly of violence and taxation can also be misused by

small interest groups (1996, p. 175). As Delmotte and Majastre (Chap. 4 in this volume) point out, Elias understands that the state's monopoly of violence is an ambiguous innovation that can be peace enforcing within its own boundaries while inter-state relationships are based on an escalating spiral of strengthening positions of power.

The issue of relations between countries is addressed by Elias more emphatically towards the end of his life, in important but not so well-known texts like *Violence and Civilization: the State Monopoly of Physical Violence and its Infringement* ([1981] 1988)[4] and *Humana Conditio* ([1985] 2010). Elias's view on this matter is rather simple: since there is no monopoly of violence at the international level, no pacification process occurs.

> On this level we are living today just as our so-called primitive ancestors did. As tribes were earlier a danger to other tribes, so, states today are still a constant danger to other states. Their representatives and members must always be on guard. They must always reckon with the possibility of being invaded by a stronger state and brought into dependency or even subjection. At the international level there is no overarching power to prevent a stronger state from invading a weaker state to demand taxes and obedience from its citizens and so *de facto* to annex the weaker state. Nobody can prevent a mighty state from doing this except another mighty state. And if such states exist they live in constant fear of each other, in the fear that their rivals could become stronger than themselves. (Elias [1981] 1988, pp. 180–181)

In *Humana Conditio* ([1985] 2010), Elias's analysis is also based on the idea of hegemony contests, one that he had used since *The Court Society* and *The Civilizing Process*, where he shows France emerging as a nation state. In this book, he reinforces what he had already stated in *Violence and Civilization*, quoted above: if the state has the monopoly of violence and taxation, the outcome of which is an internal process of pacification, then its relationship to other nation states can be one of war. The organization of countries as nation states implies the possibility of going to war, of having the capacity to defend themselves against other states.

After the Second World War, Elias sees humanity as having reached the end of a road, with the hegemony contest between great powers becoming global. Wars were no longer localized; the outcome could be the destruction of a major part of the world, if not the entire world:

> If the hegemonic states of the present, the States with the greatest military power potential, continue to follow the millennial tradition of humanity, according to which it is taken for granted that the struggle for their own security and, if possible, their own supremacy among human groups, must be decided by the use of physical force, by a life-and-death struggle, they will in all probability deliver up not only a major part of their own population, but a considerable portion of humanity, to a more or less agonising death and at the same time render a considerable part of the earth, if not the whole earth, uninhabitable for human beings. (Elias [1985] 2010, p. 126)

Elias even speculates on the aftermath of nuclear war, which he hoped could be a learning process leading to global co-operation for the maintenance of peace. At the same time, he hoped that nuclear war could be prevented by ideological disarmament or by mediation by a neutral institution (van Benthem van den Bergh 2012).

Hopes of an international agency—such as the United Nations—appear also in *Changes in the We-I balance*, written in 1987 and published as Part III of *The Society of Individuals*. For Elias, the organization in supra-state agencies, such as the United Nations, means an advanced stage of the civilizing process, one that became possible only after humanity had suffered two world wars:

> People cannot simply know, they have to learn what institutions they should create to deal with the problem of global integration, and in most cases they do not learn simply by objective thought processes. Usually they learn by bitter experience. Two world wars were needed to bring to the feeble central institutions of the evolving association of states into existence. The hopes of many people, and perhaps the efforts of some of them, are directed at trying to ensure that the bitter experience of a third world war is not needed to push forward the development and effectiveness of these central institutions. (Elias 2001, p. 167)

The way to avoid *war as a permanent institution*, in Elias's view, is to have an international agency that could mediate or compel countries not to go to war. It is something like the monopoly of violence at the international level. Like people, countries would not start a war if they were forced to live in peace with each other, if there were an external power strong enough to force them to do so. But, as he recognizes, neither the United Nations nor any other international agency effectively has the power to compel countries not to go to war.

3 War, a Human Condition, Not an Individual Condition

The relation between state formation and internal pacification is by no means as simple as one might think. In *Violence and Civilization: The State Monopoly of Physical Violence and its Infringement* ([1981] 1998), Elias continues the discussion started in *The Civilizing Process* on the relationship between the state-formation process and the development of habitus.

I quote at length the first and important paragraph of this text:

> Civilization is never completed and constantly endangered. It is endangered because the maintenance of civilized standards of behavior requires certain conditions, such as a relatively stable level of individual self-discipline. These are linked in turn to particular social structures, such as the provision of goods and services, the preservations of an accustomed standard of living and especially social pacification—the non-violent settling of conflicts through the state. But the internal pacification of society is always endangered by social and personal conflicts which are among the normal phenomena of social life and which the pacifying institutions serve to resolve. (Elias [1981] 1988, p. 177)

In *The Germans*, Elias independent texts revolve around two related discussions: causes of genocide with a view to specific issues in German history and a more general theoretical discussion on the validity of the civilizing processes. In the first pages of *Humana Conditio*, he takes this second approach further, emphasizing a general theoretical issue:

> Whatever peculiarities may distinguish Hitler's war from all the others, we cannot fully do justice to the problem of humanity that concerns us here if we restrict our view to this last European war or to the possible world war to come, if we do not ask why there are wars at all. ([1985] 2010, p. 78)

"Why war?" is also the title of a text resulting from an exchange of letters between the acknowledged intellectuals Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud ([1932] 1993), promoted by the League of Nations International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation. Einstein wrote to Freud in August of 1932, receiving an answer the following month. Although Freud later referred to it as a boring and sterile discussion, three things are of interest: Freud's use of the theory of instincts; his understanding of the source and relevance of culture; and his ideas on pacifism (Forbes 2007, p. 17).

The first point is what brings me to this publication and its direct connection to violence and war.

In his letter, Freud revisits a discussion from *Civilization and Its Discontents* about violence and law. In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud defines civilization as "the whole sum of the achievements and the regulations which distinguish our lives from those of our animal ancestors and which serve two purposes—namely to protect men against nature and to adjust their mutual relations" (1962, p. 36). The first requirement of civilization—the protection against nature—is, in his view, an uncontroversial one. In this sense, a country is considered as having a high level of civilization if whatever can assist man with exploitation of the land and protect him against the forces of nature is attended to and properly ordered. Moreover, beauty, cleanliness and order are special requirements of civilization. Mental activities such as intellectual, scientific and artistic achievements are also characteristics of civilization (1962, pp. 38–41).

The more controversial matter regards regulation of mutual relations. According to Freud, communal life becomes possible only when a majority of people are united and become stronger than any stronger individual. The power of this community is therefore established as a "right", as opposed to the "brute force" of any individual: "This replacement of the power of the individual by the power of a community constitutes the decisive step of civilization" (1962, p. 42). In essence there is limited scope for satisfaction for members of a community. The next requirement is, therefore, that the legal order shall not be violated in favour of an individual. In this regard, an ultimate outcome should be a system of law to which all have contributed by partly forgoing the satisfaction of their personal drives, and which allows no one to become a victim of brute force (1962, p. 42). Freud agrees with Einstein about the League of Nations: it was meant to take on this role at the international level, to arbitrate conflicts between countries. But, due to its lack of power to coerce all countries, this objective cannot be achieved.

In his letter to Einstein, Freud agrees with his interlocutor that human beings have "something" that makes it easier for them to be infected with war fever. According to Freud, human instincts are of two kinds: those that conserve and unify (erotic instincts) and those of destruction and killing (aggressive or destructive instincts) (Freud [1932] 1993, p. 4). These ideas followed revisions he introduced in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*,

where he "implicitly introduced into his theory an aggressive instinct conceived of as virtually primitive and independent" (Deigh 2008, p. 296). Aside from defining two different kinds of instincts, Freud understands that human actions seldom result from the stimulus of a single instinct.

The discussion on the concept of instinct in Freud's theory is a very controversial one. I have no intention of entering this controversy or pretending to be an expert on it. Here I will only introduce some of what he wrote in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, one of his major "social" texts and one that seems to have importantly influenced Elias.

In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, it is Freud's understanding that in order for a group or community to stay together, and for its members not to be subjected to the physical force of one stronger individual, all individuals make a sacrifice in terms of their instincts (and freedom): "the liberty of the individual is no gift of civilization" (1962, p. 42). In Freud´s understanding, civilization is built upon renunciation; it presupposes the non-satisfaction of powerful drives, whether by suppression, repression or any other mean (Freud 1962, p. 44).

Civilization imposes great sacrifices on one's sexuality as well as on aggressiveness. Human beings, in Freud's eyes, are not gentle creatures, but one that have "a powerful share of aggressiveness" (Freud 1962, p. 58):

> In consequence of this primary mutual hostility of human beings, civilized society is perpetually threatened with disintegration. The interest of work in common would not hold it together; instinctual passions are stronger than reasonable interests. Civilization has to use its utmost efforts in order to set limits to limit man's aggressive instincts and to hold the manifestations of them in check by psychical reaction-formations. (Freud 1962, p. 59)

Aggression is introjected, internalized, sent back to where it came from. It is directed against the individual´s own ego, setting itself up as the super-ego. Civilization overcomes individual aggressiveness by disarming it and setting up an internal authority to watch over (Freud 1962, pp. 70–71).

Civilization and Its Discontents is a pessimistic book; civilization is seen as a source of unhappiness to human beings: "The aggressive instinct is that 'piece of unconquerable nature'—that 'piece of our own psychical constitution'—that defeats every effort we make to regulate our social relations in a way that furthers our happiness" (Deigh 2008, p. 302). In his letter to Einstein, Freud resumes this discussion, affirming that:

> The death instinct becomes an impulse to destruction when, with the aid of certain organs, it directs its action outwards, against external objects. The living being, that is to say, defends its own existence by destroying foreign bodies. (Freud [1932] 1993, p. 5)

Malesevic and Ryan (2012, p. 170) argue that "Elias's epistemology is grounded in essentialist ontology of the subject so that violence is posited as a biological fact rather than an intrinsic part of the Civilising Process itself". Elias does understand that human beings have *something* aggressive in the structure of our personalities. But this *something* is not an instinct, it is not immutable. And neither was it immutable in Freud's view, by the way.

Elias was recognizably influenced by Freud (Elias 1985; Joly 2010a, p. 7; Lahire 2013). Joly (2010b/2) argues that, when Elias was forced to go into exile in 1933, he already had a challenging project of reshaping sociology in mind. By working on court society, Elias would have decided to privilege a historical subject that made it possible to connect the feudal and the national-industrial figurations, allowing him to consider the dynamics of social processes. It was also at this early stage in his career that he began to regard psychoanalysis as a challenge to address. Within this institutional figuration, he was "prompted to outline the contours of a psycho-sociology that was autonomous both in relation to Freudian orthodoxy and historical materialism" (Joly 2010b/2, p. 11).

Albeit influenced by Freud's psychoanalysis, his use of it was therefore a critical one.[5] He recognized the importance of concepts like ego, superego and self-ideal, understood by Freud as functions of auto-regulation (reason and conscience) that develop along the individual process of maturation and are interwoven with the social process of learning. But for Elias, Freud fails to understand that changes in the social structure also have an important influence on it. As a consequence, different generations can have different personality structures (Elias 2010).

In Elias's view, human beings do not have an "elementary urge" (Malesevic and Ryan 2012, p. 171), but instead "an innate potential automatically to shift this whole physical apparatus to a different gear if they feel endangered" ([1981] 1988, pp. 176–177). In other words, the potential for aggressiveness can be activated from the outside, which makes conflicts an aspect of social structures (p. 177). The process of internal pacification, as explained above, is directly linked to the state-formation process, in other words to the monopolization of violence and taxation at the hands of nation states.

Defining "Civilization" for a dictionary published in 1986, Elias ([1986] 2008a, p. 3) writes:

> Human beings are not civilized by nature, but they have by nature a disposition which, under certain conditions, makes possible a civilizing—that is, an individual self-regulation—of momentary behavioral impulses based on drives and affects, or a redirection of those impulses from primary to secondary goals and, in some cases, their sublimatory transformation. (It is hardly necessary, but perhaps useful, to say that Sigmund and Anna Freud were the godparents of the concept of human drive impulses capable of being shaped and sublimated.)

It is by no means enough—or even correct—to say that the instinct of aggressiveness decreases along the process of civilization. It is not a matter of "less", nor is it a matter of instinct in itself. There is a shift in the balance between external constraints and self-constraint in favour of the latter and, in this way, the whole personality structure changes, the conscience and the super-ego also change. Different types and expressions of violence become more or less accepted and acceptable—in other words, social sensibility towards violence changes. For instance, in the last century or so interest in violent crime has changed to interest in more psychological issues, such as non-physical sexual crimes that can devastate the victim psychologically and emotionally. Actions and attitudes previously accepted are criminalized and new crimes—such as sexual harassment or the prohibition of rape during war—appear in criminal and penal codes in most countries (Vigarello 1998, p. 232).

The standard of aggressiveness, its tone and intensity, change over time. It is connected to the level of division of functions, by the dependence of each individual on the other and on technical apparatus (Elias 2000, p. 161). As Elias said in one of his most quoted definitions, "if in this or that region the power of a central authority grows, if over a larger or smaller area the people are forced to live in peace with each other, the moulding of affects and standards of the drive-economy are very gradually changed as well" (Elias 2000, p. 169).

As Dunning and Hugues (2013, p. 50) once wrote, Elias's sociology is *radically* processual and *radically* relational in character. His approach stresses what human beings are and how they *came to be* as they are; and when Elias connects changes in personality structure with changes in social structure, it operates through relations. In other words, if the growth of

the power of central authority allows for pacification, it is by being forced to live in peace *with* the others that one internalizes the current stage of acceptance or antipathy towards violence.

4 Conclusion

The theory of civilizing processes can be seen on two levels, an empirical one and an explanatory one. In *The Civilizing Process*, Elias empirically substantiates his discussion about changes in the personality structure and changes in the social structure, especially the state-formation process. The relation between these two empirically substantiated discussions is built through an explanatory hypothesis, directly linking changes of the personality structure to the pacification process resulting from state-formation processes (Dunning and Mennell 2003, pp. xviii–xvi) Transforming this into a graphic:

Although *The Civilizing Process* is an empirically based discussion, Elias does take it one step further, establishing (or trying to establish) this as a central theory, involving "the tracing of connections between the minutiae of social habituses and developing social standards on the one hand, and interdependency chains, levels of state formation, functional democratization and degrees of pacification on the other" (Dunning and Mennell 2003, p. xxix).

In *The Civilizing Process* there are references to wars between countries as part of state-formation processes, as part of the monopolization mechanism. But the discussion that permeates the book is the *pacification process*, one of the directions taken by the process of civilization. By the same token, we can say that in *The Court Society* (2002) Elias gives more

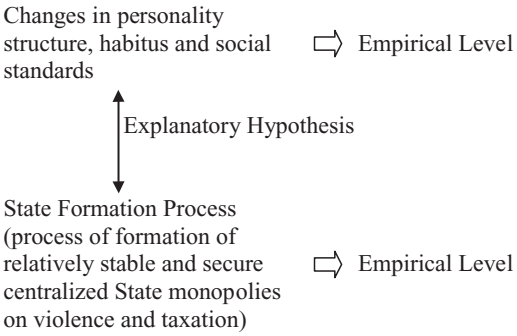

Fig. 2.1 Empirical levels and explanatory hypothesis in TCP

scope to the discussion of the figurations characteristic of the Court and its mechanisms of monopolizing power than to the discussion about violence at this period or even the French Revolution itself.

At the end of the 1980s, although he was still writing about hope, Elias sounds very pessimistic about humankind and the possibility of enduring pacific human relations. By following his path from *The Civilizing Process* to *Humana Conditio*, we see that both his attempts to discuss violence and at the same time his acceptance of the limits of the pacification process increased.

Elias started to write about and discuss violence more openly and emphatically only towards the last decade or two of his life. I would not classify Elias as part of the sociology of conflict tradition (according to Randall Collins' (2009) classification). In *The Civilizing Process* Elias looks for the understanding of pacification as a process and of more pacified relations resulting from development of human history.

In *Humana Conditio* Elias emphasizes war not only as part of the past history of humankind but also—very possibly—of the future. Therefore, war is part of the processes of civilization at the level of relations between countries, nation states or survival units. This understanding gives more importance and strength to his frequently repeated assertion that societies were not fully *pacified* by the processes of civilization, and that the *process* of pacification is a never-ending one that is always endangered, as clearly stated in *The Germans* (1996).

The understanding of *war as a human condition* brings us back to rethinking the three levels of civilizing process explored above—the individual, the social and the international—and their connections. If war is a human condition at the international level, we have to understand conflicts—and violent conflicts—between countries as part of the processes of civilization. If Elias mentioned some of these conflicts only *en passant* in *The Civilizing Process*, it is up to us to take this research further, bringing new data to discuss how it can be integrated in his theory and how it affects all levels of civilizing processes. One thing is very clear: the individual does not have an aggressive instinct that has to be civilized and domesticated, but it does have the capacity to react and, therefore, the social process of pacification has an important effect at the level of engendering more stable habituses.

If "war, the essence of which is violence, (…) constantly threatens the non-violent civil conditions promised by the state monopoly of violence" (Delmotte and Majastre, Chap. 4 in this volume), it is also correct to say

that social, economical and political instability also encourages the intra-state increase of violence (see, for example, Souza and Marchi Júnior, Chap. 6 in this volume). The growing power of organized groups—such as the powerful drug cartels that inhabited Colombia in the 1980s and 1990s—may also threaten the state's monopoly of violence and in some cases promotes conflictual inter-state relations. Pacification processes are very fragile, and their maintenance can be affected by the connections between all its levels.

I have always found Elias's sociology very rich, and one of its main strengths is that it makes us focus on the relations between individual people, groups and configurations, as well as on the connection between all levels of civilizing processes. Studying and understanding violence—and its inverse, pacification and pacified relations—means focusing on the interconnection between these levels. Civilization—and pacification—is constantly endangered, as I have already said. We realize how fragile it is also by understanding that it depends on the interconnection between all levels of civilizing processes.

Notes

1. For Elias's biography, consult Elias (2013); Mennell (1998).
2. Analysis and comments on *The Civilizing Process* can be found in many good papers and books: Dunning and Hugues (2013); Dunning and Mennell (2003); Dunning and Van Krieken (1997); Goudsblom (1994); Goudsblom and Mennell (1998); Heinich (2001); Landini (2013); Mennell (1998); Quilley and Loyal (2004, 2005); Smith (2001).
3. The importance of the monopolization of taxation can be clearly understood by reading *The Court Society*, a book that preceded *The Civilizing Process* and that should always be read together with it.
4. A condensed and reworked version of this text was published as the third chapter of *The Germans* (1996).
5. For Elias critics of Freud's theory, see Elias ([1990] 2010).

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CHAPTER 3

Figurational Analysis of Michael Haneke's *Time of the Wolf*

İrem Özgören Kınlı

1 Introduction

The Civilizing Process is a value-neutral and "technical" concept allowing us to see how, in Western societies, the balance between external social control and self-control has shifted in favour of the latter throughout the centuries. The main features of this process are the monopolization of physical violence by the state and the internal pacification of society, the removal of violence from centre stage to backstage, rising disgust towards acts of violence, extending chains of reciprocal relations between interdependent people, and more comprehensive mutual identification. Fletcher (1997, p. 82) suggests the most important characteristics of a civilizing process are the following:

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> A shift in the balance between constraints by others and self-restraint involving the taming, differentiation and increasing complexity of external controls; the development of a social standard of behaviour and feeling which generates the emergence of a more-even, all-round, stable and differentiated self-restraint; an increase in the scope of mutual identification between people.

Since its publication in 1939, *The Civilizing Process* has been both praised and criticized (Goudsblom 1994), generating fierce theoretical debates.[1] According to Heinich (2000), most of the criticisms of this theory are based on misunderstandings. The theory has been variously criticized for its alleged simplicity,[2] evolutionism,[3] unilinearity,[4] ethnocentrism,[5] underestimation of the civilizing function of religious movements and/or negligence of religious institutions' roles,[6] failure to provide an explanation for the Holocaust,[7] violent actions,[8] wars[9] and barbarism in the contemporary era.[10]

In response to these criticisms,[11] it should be noted that the concept of civilization[12] developed by Elias refers to a transformation of social and individual habitus among the secular upper strata in Western European societies. The fact that *The Civilizing Process* deals particularly with European history does not make it ethnocentric. Additionally, the concept denotes neither progress nor value judgements[13]; it explains the outcome of one long-term socio-psychological process.

Besides, Elias never argues that violence has been totally eliminated in the contemporary era. Elias characterizes violence as a direct infringement of physical integrity[14] and, for him, aggressiveness can be actuated by both natural and social conflicts. Therefore "it is not aggressiveness that triggers conflicts but conflicts that trigger aggressiveness" (Elias 1988, p. 178). In *The Civilizing Process*, barbarism and civilization are presented as being "mutually exclusive" (Van Krieken 1999, p. 300). It is also worth stressing that Elias did not consider his theory of the civilizing process as unidirectional, inevitable or progressive. Elias (2000, p. 532) argues that:

> The armour of civilized 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.

Since there is always a risk of the breakdown of civilization, figurational sociologists not only place emphasis on civilizing processes, but also on decivilizing and dyscivilizing[15] processes. Decivilizing processes may simply

be defined as "what happens when civilizing processes go into reverse" (Mennell 1990, p. 205), and "civilizing and decivilizing processes can occur simultaneously[16] in particular societies and not simply in the same or different societies at different points in time" (Elias 1996, p. XV). Although Elias does not systematically elaborate his theory of decivilizing process, Dunning and Sheard (1979, pp. 288–89), Dunning et al. (1988, pp. 242–45) and Goudsblom (1989, p. 84) all insist on the implications of this notion for the theory of *The Civilizing Process*. Elias himself refers to the same idea (Elias and Dunning 1986, pp. 19–62), using expressions such as "regression to barbarism", "vulnerability of civilization", "breakdown" and "decay" to describe decivilization (Elias 1996, p. 308), and the term "decivilizing spurt" (Elias 1996, pp. 1 and 15) to refer to the Nazi genocide of Jews. According to Fletcher (1997, p. 83), Elias employs the word "spurt" to describe a phase in which the pace of the relative speed of progress or change increases, while he uses the term "decivilizing" for when civilizing processes turn and proceed in the opposite direction. The theory is, therefore, multilinear. It is formulated in such a way as to provide an explanation for the various paths of different European state-formation processes, and to offer reasons for the long-term decivilizing developments that provoked the rise of the Nazi belief system in Germany.[17] Over the course of time, sociologists such as Van Krieken (1999),[18] Pratt (1999), Spierenburg (2001), Zwaan (2003), Dunning et al. (2003) and Wacquant (2004) elaborate on the decivilizing concept, generally with a focus on specific case studies, in order to demonstrate the importance of this notion for potential explanations of violence and other social phenomena.

This chapter focuses on the notion of decivilizing process and suggests the possibility of doing figurational sociology through movies. Despite the limited number of references to Eliasian works in movie studies,[19] media works may provide an illustrative function, clarifying the meaning of analytical concepts in figurational sociology. The concept of decivilizing, along with other figurational conceptual tools, offers an important framework for contemporary leisure studies.[20] In this chapter, *The Time of the Wolf* (2003) by the well-known Austrian film director and screenwriter Michael Haneke, has been selected as an illustration of decivilizing spurts. Haneke's movies deal directly with the question of violence in modern society. In parallel with the Eliasian perspective, all violence in Haneke's movies is off screen and is presented as occurring everywhere, even when it is not actually seen.[21]

Underrated by its viewers and underappreciated by its reviewers,[22] *The Time of the Wolf* (Original release title: *Le temps du loup*; written and directed by Haneke in 2003) follows the story of the Laurent family: Georges (Daniel Duval), Anne (Isabelle Huppert) and their two children, Eva (Anaïs Demoustier) and Ben (Lucas Biscombe). It starts with the arrival of the Laurents at their country cabin, already occupied by another family. When Georges is killed by the intruder, Anne has to travel with her children in a quest for security, but then an unidentified disaster obliges them to embark on a ceaseless search for shelter and food. In the course of their journey, the Laurents discover a train station where they shelter with other survivors, hoping to be rescued. The final scene of the movie gives the impression that they eventually manage to board a train.

Inspired by "possible symptoms of decivilizing processes" (Mennell 1990, p. 206) and by "a workable synthesis", made by "universally applicable criteria for doing figurational process sociology" (Wouters 2014), this chapter analyzes the display of changes in structural processes, manners/culture, social habitus and modes of knowledge to be found in *The Time of the Wolf*. Four conceptual tools are used: changes in the pattern of cooperation and competition; we–I balance between established and outsider groups; transformations in the control of nature, in social controls and in self-controls; and changes in modes of knowledge and the balance of involvement and detachment.

2 Changes in Pattern of Cooperation and Competition

Elias's conception of process sociology takes into account the fluctuating state of equilibrium between co-operation and competition. The balance between competition and co-operation is directly linked to levels of societal and global interdependencies. It serves as a criterion for the determination of changes both in terms of longitude and direction of impact of "interdependency networks as well as in levels of differentiation, integration, and pacification" (Wouters and Mennell 2013, pp. 556–60). According to Mennell (1990, p. 205), the decivilizing processes are characterized by "breaking links and shorter chains of social interdependence, associated with higher levels of danger and incalculability in everyday life". Seen from this perspective, the movie shows how a type of undefined global catastrophe characterized by a "decivilizing spurt" causes the weakening of the central state's authority,

which leads inevitably to the lessening of chains of interdependence, and a change in the pattern of co-operation and competition.

In the movie, while Anne and her children are on the road seeking shelter, they cannot benefit from any assistance from their acquaintances. When they arrive in the village, they ask for help from a familiar occupant. "It's your duty to help us", Anne says to the acquaintance. He refuses, telling them: "You really don't know what's going on, or are you just acting stupid?" We witness similar types of refusal of assistance throughout the movie, but this is the first striking scene in which the preoccupation with survival leads to the creation of a highly competitive environment, making it harder for people to connect to each other. The desire to possess rare resources becomes a threat to co-operation. This is clear in the case of George's murder by the father of a vagrant family hiding in the Laurents' cabin. Georges is killed by Fred during a futile attempt at negotiation, when Georges says: "Look, can't we talk about this? We could work something out. […]We can give you some [of our supplies]."

The interweaving of people and their organization at the railroad depot where the Laurents start to live together with various survivors in a barter economy, may be seen as an example of the "shorter chains of interdependence". Since there is no central authority to protect rights and settle disputes, a self-appointed gun-toting leader, Koslowski (Olivier Gourmet), claims the right to impose justice on behalf of his group. On one hand, Koslowski amplifies competition when he asks for beneficial items and sexual favours in return for the food and water he has obtained from mercenary traders; on the other hand, he emphasizes the need for co-operation between group members on various occasions in order to survive. From a figurational sociology standpoint, however, the balance of co-operation and competition between survivors generally inclines towards the latter in this type of disaster.

3 We–I Balance Between Established and Outsider Groups

Elias uses the concept "we-group" to describe the shared bonds between people that supposedly exist primarily within the family. Eventually, "people also establish relations when they 'live together at the same place', when they make their homes in the same locality" (Elias and Scotson 2008, p. 172). For Elias, the process of group identity, the expression of

I and We, is composed of mutually dependent power connecting the acts and attitudes of various social groupings. Hence, we-concepts are multi-layered (Elias 2001, p. 202).

According to Elias (2001), the we–I balance shows shifting configurations of self-perception within an incessantly changing society. Accordingly, the processes of state formation influence the we–I balance of individuals. At earlier stages of social development, individuals are intensely and directly subject to their we-groups, such as families, kinship groups or local communities. At this level of the social development process, the we–I balance inclines in favour of we-group. We-groups are "survival units" which are necessary for obtaining food, providing security and receiving support in case of necessity. Moreover, in the course of transition from an earlier stage of development to a more complex level of integration, Elias (2001, p. 179) points out that: "a certain stage in a process of state formation can favour individualization, the greater emphasis on the I-identity of the individual person, and the detachment of that person from the traditional groupings". Yet, in times of crisis in contemporary societies, the we–I balance has a tendency to favour the we-group which reappears as a survival group for the individual. Here the model of an established–outsider figuration (we–they relations) is helpful in understanding and explaining interdependencies between groups, which may cause various tensions and conflicts. In Elias and Scotson's (2008, p. 22) own words:

> The problem is why and how human beings perceive one another as belonging to the same group and include one another within the group boundaries which they establish when saying 'we' in their reciprocal communications, while at the same time excluding other human beings whom they perceive as belonging to another group and to whom they collectively refer as "they".

The established–outsider theory was developed by Elias and Scotson (2008) to examine the relationships between two groups living in a specific neighbourhood in Leicester. The "established" group had been settled in this place over many generations, while the "outsider" group was composed of newcomers. There were no differences in social class, ethnicity and religion between the residents of this area, but the established group developed a greater internal social cohesion depending upon the duration of residence. "That 'oldness' is regarded as a great social asset, as a matter of pride and satisfaction, can be observed in many different social settings" (Elias and Scotson 2008, p. 175). The authors argue that the established

group systematically excluded and stigmatized the outsiders, with whom they rejected any kind of association. In Eliasian terms, "Exclusion and stigmatisation of the outsiders by the established groups were thus powerful weapons used by the latter to maintain their identity, to assert their superiority, keeping others firmly in their place" (Elias and Scotson 2008, p. 4). The model treats race relations as a type of established–outsider relationship characterized by a power struggle between the established and the outsiders, and shifting in favour of the former group (Elias and Scotson 2008, p. 15; see also Dunning 2004):

> The fact that one is an established group, with superior power resources, and the other is an outsider group, greatly inferior in terms of its power ratio, against which the established group can close ranks. What are called "race relations", in other words, are simply established-outsider relations of a particular type.

The members of the established group perceive outsiders as "law-breakers", "status-violators", "minority of the worst", and use "blame-gossip" against them to maintain their superior position, which is perceived as being under threat from these incomers. Correspondingly, the forms of demonstrations of self-awareness of we-groups are, with reference to established–outsider relations, closely linked to the process of structural change in society, such as the development of civilizing and/or decivilizing processes and the network of dependencies.

In the movie, the group dynamics in terms of established–outsider figurations play a key role. Survival units at the railroad depot unify around we-images. In this chaos, we observe the formation of survival we-groups in relation to the difficult situation and the attempts made by the people to survive the disaster. The families, as a type of basic community and a primary means of defence, appear as the survival we-groups. Throughout the whole movie, family bonds are significant and parents try to protect their children from the detrimental effects of the catastrophe. When Anna arrives at the train station with her two children, the depot is being shared by a Polish family with children and some elderly men. Anna meets these new people over there and frequently asks: "Where are you from? The city?" People from different social classes, ages, races, nationalities and ethnicities have to co-exist in this setting in the aftermath of the disaster. As we can see, except for the gun-toting men, the relatively longer-settled ones have a greater tendency to claim their superiority over the others,

the newcomers. People at the gathering spot, as a we-group, justify their superior position over the recently arrived caravan of refugees, as a they-group, by giving out information possessed solely because of their "oldness". For instance, people gathered at the station wait in hope for a train to rescue them from certain death. On this vital issue, the ones with longer residency give out information about the time of the previous train. Based upon the positive impact of the acquisition of this knowledge, it can be inferred that those who had already settled in the area use their relatively established position to dominate the newly arrived outsider groups. This can also be seen in Anna's dialogue with a refugee woman who places her possessions where Anna and her family have already settled: "Hey! Do you mind? Those are our things. That belongs to us. That's our spot.—So what? […]—Clear off, OK!—It's nobody's spot."

If we consider race relations from an Eliasian perspective as a type of established–outsider relationship, we can see in the movie the basic problems arising from the encounters between groups of newcomers, foreigners and groups of older residents. Here are some examples:

> [A villager's accusations of murder against the Polish father]: "I don't believe it! Am I daydreaming or what? Look who it is! The Polack from our village. What a nice surprise! The bastard and all his brood used to work for Larnaudie. One night François died just like that and the Polacks did a runner. Didn't think we'd meet again so soon, huh? […] Look at me when I talk to you Polack scum."
>
> [A villager's accusations of theft against the same Polish father]: "Your friendly foreigner here and his brood are thieving bastards and always have been. Isn't that right? They used to live in my village with their brood. They killed and robbed a farmer. […] Last night, someone stole meat, water and a goat. We just realized. I'm sure it was him! Since we set off nothing's been stolen. Never!"

As we can see, the Polish father is regarded as a threat to the existing order. As a foreigner who cannot speak even one word of French, he is accused by the French villagers—who are taking up the positions of the established—with their distorted beliefs and prejudices about the out-groups. In this chaotic order, the Polish father, and afterwards the young Romanian runaway child, are treated as "law-breakers" and "status-violators". The Polish father is physically and verbally attacked, and the Romanian child expelled on the spot when it is revealed that he has stolen a goat. The following words of Elias and Scotson (2008, p. 178) may give some insights into

how the established groups keep their superior position, which the outgroups seem to threaten:

> They may or may not be "civilised" in the contemporary European sense of the word, but in relation to those over whom they successfully claim status superiority they are as a rule more "civilised" in the factual sense of the word: their code demands a higher level of self-restraint in some or all respects; it prescribes a more firmly regulated behaviour either all round or in specific situations, which is bound up with greater foresight, greater self-restraint, greater refinement of manners and which is studded with more elaborate taboos.

4 Changes in Control of Nature, in Social Control and in Self-Control

In *The Civilizing Process,* Elias articulates the dynamic tension between internal and external constraints, and the gradual internalization of external controls. Wouters (2007), Wouters and Mennell (2013), and latterly Wouters (2014), emphasize the fact that Elias's attention is not limited to increasing self-constraints or to changing external social constraints into self-constraints. Elias's concept of the "triad of controls" is more inclusive, and therefore more appropriate for tracking the changes in figurations. In Elias's own terms (2006, p. 238), there are:

> three fundamental controls of people in society—the control of humans over extra-human natural events, the control of people over each other, and the control of each person over him or herself. They too change in a characteristic manner from stage to stage, though certainly not by a simple increase or decrease.

According to Elias (1978, pp. 156–57), the different "stages of development" can be revealed by society's "control-chances" of natural events, its regulations of social relationships, and its individual members' self-control. For him, changes in control of nature coincide with "the technological development", transformations in types of control exerted (actively or passively) by group actions connected to "the development of social organisation", and changes in self-control. These types of processes are all related to "the civilizing process". For the first two types, there is a gradual—but uneven—increase in control-chances parallel with the development of society, in spite of some reversals. Unlike the first two types of change, the changes in self-

control cannot be depicted in a simple manner as "an extension or increase of control"; neither is it an inevitably "unilinear" process. All these types of controls are interrelated (Elias 2001, pp. 138–39):

> Control of nature, social control and self-control form a kind of chain ring; they form a triangle of interconnected functions which can serve as a basic pattern for the observation of human affairs. One side cannot develop without the others; the extent and form of one depend on those of the others; and if one of them collapses, sooner or later the others follow.

In the *Civilizing Process*, Elias (2000, pp. 369–73) advances the idea that "when a monopoly of force is formed, pacified social spaces are created" by imposing "on people a greater or lesser degree of self-control". Fletcher (1997, p. 83) describes his three criteria for decivilization—"shift in the balance between constraints by others and self-restrain in favour of constraints by others; […] the emergence of a less even, all-round, stable and differentiated pattern of self-restrain; […] a contraction in the scope of mutual identification between constituent groups and individuals"— as the complement of civilization, highlighting the nature of the relationship between decivilizing processes and the dynamic balance of controls.

Therefore, it is possible to argue that the complex relationships displayed in the movie between people, their environment and the social processes that shape their conditions are illustrations of Elias's triad of controls. When we look more closely at the relationship of people to their environment, we observe the survivors trying to control their deteriorating natural conditions.

In *Fire and Civilization*, Goudsblom (1992) describes the experience of gaining knowledge and skill to control fire as a form of civilizing process. Correspondingly, several sequences in Haneke's movie demonstrate that the domestication of fire is highly related to the level of social organization. In spite of the positive uses of fire as a source of heat, light and protection against the cold and darkness, *The Time of the Wolf*, as an example of one decivilizing spurt, emphasizes the role of its destructive power in shaping human experience. The sequence in which the Laurent family unexpectedly comes across a pile of burning horses while seeking shelter contributes to the disturbing impact of fire damage. Moreover, the use of darkness as a narrative tool, and the survivors' failure to transform the destructive force of fire into a productive force, highlight the decivilizing processes in *The Time of the Wolf*. This can also be seen in the

scene where Eva's inability to control fire causes the barn to catch fire. Surprisingly, towards the end of the film, fire is symbolized as a tool of the liberation of humanity from disaster. This is exemplified when Benny attempts to sacrifice himself on a fire. The self-immolation scene in which Benny removes his clothes and stands naked in front of the flames illustrates some human features: nakedness, vulnerability and powerlessness in the presence of nature. Likewise, waiting for the rescue train represents the human endeavour to control nature. The train is presented as a symbol of progress in the struggle to control nature. In this sense, the dominant theme is the portrayal of the train as an icon of technological development with the potential to enlighten darkness and to save humanity. Unlike Elias's perspective, civilization here is described in positive terms.

The social control of people over others is also seen in the movie. As victims of the decivilizing spurt, the survivors struggle to control each other with externally imposed rules and regulations backed by punitive measures, such as threats of deprivation of basic human needs, including food and water, and expulsion from the shelter area. The following accusations made by Koslowski during a confrontation with Thomas Brandt illustrate our argument:

> We respect the rules or we may as well give up. […] Before you and your wife arrived, the rules were respected. Rules indispensable for living together in a more or less civilized way. […] Those rules remain valid for you as much as any asshole who comes here. OK? If you don't like it take your wife and clear out.

The *Time of the Wolf* depicts a post-disaster scenario. Several scenes in the movie portray the increase of violence, the relatively low level of self-control, and the freer expression of aggression and insecurity among people. The visual display of horses killed by fire, brutal animal slaughters and the following speeches reveal cruelty to animals in the course of the movie:

> [Young Romanian runaway after finding a sheep corpse]: "Must have died of thirst. Or from putrid water. Or the shepherd killed them to drink their blood."
>
> [Young runaway about his dead dog]: "Two days before I met you he bit me. […] Why? He was wacko he wanted some meat, I don't know. I guess he was angry because we were short of food. Anyway, after all it was my

> fault. Stupid idea making friends with a wild dog. […] I killed him. That's when I spilled my embers."
>
> [Leader of a caravan of refugees after arriving at the gathering spot]: "The horses of the water merchants drink too much so we'll kill three tomorrow. For dinner, there'll be meat."

As we might expect, cruelty against animals extends unavoidably to humans (domination of armed man over others, slapping the daughter and a woman, a woman being raped, murder of the father, death of a young child, and suicide of a young woman, and so on).

5 Changes in Modes of Knowledge and Balance of Involvement and Detachment

Elias (1956, 2007) uses the concepts of involvement and detachment to explore how humans have acquired greater detachment from their emotional involvement and redundant fantasies as a result of their increased knowledge of non-human nature and of social processes. The varying degrees of involvement and detachment are opposed to the dichotomous terms "true" and "false", "objective" and "subjective", or "neutral" and "interested" (Dunning and Hughes 2013, p. 196). Elias's (1956, pp. 226–27) own words may clarify his opposition to such binary polarities:

> In using these terms, one refers in short to changing equilibria between sets of mental activities, which in human relations with other humans, with objects and with self (whatever their other functions may be) have the function to involve and to detach. As tools of thinking, therefore, "involvement" and "detachment" would remain highly ineffectual if they were understood to adumbrate a sharp division between two independent sets of phenomena. They do not refer to two separate classes of objects; used as universals they are, at best, marginal concepts.

According to Kilminster (2007, p. 120), the relationship between involvement and detachment is not conceptualized as a "zero-sum" relation. It does not suggest a kind of relationship between "two mutually exclusive opposites". To a certain extent, it is a type of active balance, which is present in all group actions. There may be both changes of involvement and detachment in the various fields of social activities depending on the level of tension balance. Elias explains his ideas on the relationship between involvement and detachment by recalling Edgar Allan Poe's short story

A Descent into the Maelström (1841). In the story, three brothers were on a fishing trip when their boat was caught in a storm. One brother was lost in the waves, and the other two were too much afraid to think clearly. Gradually, however, the younger brother regained his calm, and then he found a way to survive while the elder, paralyzed by fear, drowned as the boat capsized. In his essay "The Fishermen in the Maelström", Elias (2007, pp. 105–78) shows that the younger brother was able to take effective action by dealing with the situation in a more detached way, while the elder brother was too much involved to be able to control his fear. Elias uses this story to exemplify how fears have to be surmounted in the production of reality-congruent knowledge.

The theory of involvement and detachment defends the idea that a higher degree of detachment from affective involvement is closely related to a higher degree of knowledge and control of natural, as well as some social and psychic processes. In this respect, Loyal and Quilley (2013) have pointed out that:

> Elias shows how high levels of danger induce greater degrees of involvement, making more detached observation and induction of possible connections between events and phenomena more difficult—and hence create obstacles to the expansion of the social stock of reality-congruent knowledge about the world.

In the movie, the balance of involvement and detachment shifts towards the former as the danger level rises. It becomes increasingly difficult for survivors to acquire a detached way of thinking. In order to confront the challenges of the catastrophe, they develop survival strategies that accord with fantasy-laden and mythical thinking. The discussion among the survivors around the tale of the thirty-six just men is an example of the higher degree of fantasy-related knowledge that emerges with an increased level of danger. According to Kabbalistic and Hasidic tales, it is believed that in each period of time there are thirty-six just men, known as the *Lamed-vav Tzaddikim*, or the thirty-six righteous ones (Schwartz 2004, p. 397). It is assumed that the world exists due to the virtues of these hidden saints who are generally described as living in remote places. When one dies, he is replaced by another. Thus, they are the supporters of life. In *The Time of the Wolf*, survivors come to believe that the thirty-six just men would guarantee the world's salvation. Under the influence of these tales, Benny decides to sacrifice himself by self-immolation, as mentioned

earlier, for the sake of the redemption of all humankind. Moreover, the following speeches demonstrate how survivors, as the victims of the decivilizing spurt, are relatively more inclined to explain and understand the world through fantasy-laden knowledge when they lack control of nature, social control and self-control:

> [Béa explains to Anne the existence of the Just and she asks her whether Koslowski is a member of this mythical group]: "-You think he's one of the Just?—The what?—I know it's hard to tell even in the sack. But he has us all under his thumb so it's possible he's one of the Just. It'd be nice if he was.—I'm sorry but what do you mean by the Just?—I knew one once. Manfred. He was my boyfriend. He was one. Trouble is you cannot recognize them. Not just like that. There are 36 of them. Always. Since the Earth began. Always 36. Even now. They guarantee it will continue. That God's hand will stretch over us. If ever one goes missing. Just one … The end! As for Koslowski, I'm not sure. He does not give that impression. But when he knew me I got the feeling he was one."
>
> [A man babbles about the Just at the gathering spot]: "Hım … Perhaps he's one of your Just. Anyway, the one from Parmenterre … I saw him with my own eyes. Slap bang in the village square he undresses jumps in the fire … Burns like a torch. Had to pinch myself. […] Seriously, they bring us salvation. They're everywhere. Everywhere may be a bit strong. Wherever there are nutters. In Parmenterre … In Vognes … In Mériot … There's several of them there I hear. They jump naked into the fire and they go up in flames for us. They do the whole sacrifice thing to get this rotten world back on track. Those fellows should be among your Just. In any case … if they are...Whenever one jumps in the fire that makes one less. There's 36 of them, is that right? And their job is to keep the old ball spinning? Now, what does logic tell us? Your 36 are another club aren't they? […] The real champions of world redemption are my Brothers of Fire."

6 Conclusion

The Theory of Civilizing Process has often been misunderstood due to the neglect of the notion of the decivilizing process. Contrary to the idea that it fails to explain the violence of the modern era, the civilizing theory, along with the concept of the decivilizing process, may provide a relevant approach to understanding current problems and issues in the field of violence studies.

Not sufficiently explicated by its director, as usual, and labelled mostly as impenetrable, incomprehensible and inexplicable, the movie *The Time*

of the Wolf can be analyzed using Eliasian concepts. It can be seen as an illustration of one decivilizing process. At the same time, this chapter defends the idea that the movie may provide a relevant tool for the exploration of Norbert Elias's theoretical models and concepts. *The Time of the Wolf* may be used as a medium for doing figurational sociology, and it may help to clarify the notion of the decivilizing process. Using movies to illustrate the concepts of Eliasian sociology may also contribute to sociological knowledge. In sum, this chapter concludes with a reading of Hanekean cinema, which, it is argued, deals with the "immanent"' violence of our time, observed mostly "behind the scenes" in modern society.

Notes

1. For a collection of critiques and counter-critiques of the model, see in particular: Dunning and Mennell (2003, pp. 243–386).
2. Lasch (1985, p.714), "Elias's interpretation is far too simple."
3. According to Lenhardt (1979, pp. 127, 130), "… we have a seemingly airtight case for Elias's rationalistic evolutionism. […] Elias proposes a general theory of evolution that seems to go far beyond what that facts (his facts) support." Accordingly, for Giddens (1986, p. 241), "Elias does stress certain specific characteristics of the modern West, but these are largely submerged in a generalized evolutionism."
4. See, for example, Buck-Morss (1978, p. 188); Coser (1978, p. 565); Seigel (1979, p. 126); Robinson (1987); Giddens (1986, p. 241).
5. For the review of criticisms from the point of view of cultural relativism, see Mennell (1998, pp. 228–234).
6. According to Turner (2003, p. 96), "While Elias had given special emphasis to military conflicts and social violence in his study of the civilizing process, Elias had almost completely neglected the historical and comparative nature of religious culture, the sacred, the priesthood and the Church in the history of western society."
7. For Bauman (1989, pp. 114, 246), "Genocide arrives as an integral part of the process through which the grand design is implemented. The design gives it the legitimation; state bureaucracy gives it the vehicle; and the paralysis of society gives it the 'road clear' sign. […] The 'civilizing process', as Norbert Elias famously suggested, has made us all (or most of us at least) dislike and shun violence. But modern civilization has also invented the means to make this aversion and loathing of violence irrelevant when it comes to complicity in the commitment of violent acts—particularly when the acts are to be committed in the name of civilized values." See also Leach (1986).

8. According to Malesevic and Ryan (2012, pp. 170, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178), "Elias is unable to provide a plausible explanation of violent action. […] Elias misinterprets the collective behaviour of individuals in violent situations. […] Elias's theory is unable to explain the proliferation of organized violence in modernity. […] violence is not the Other of civilization but one of its most important components. […] the theory of a Civilizing Process misinterprets the direction of historical transformation of violence. […] the theory of a Civilizing Process cannot adequately explain the persistence and proliferation of warfare. […] Elias utilizes the concepts such as 'decivilizing spurt' to rescue his explanatory model. […] It is civilization, not the lack of it that is at the heart of the organized and protracted mass slaughter of millions of human beings."
9. For Joas (2003, p. 43), "war and violence are parts of modernity and not just its prehistory."
10. According to Coser (1978, p. 566), "by focusing attention on the outward and inward manifestations of the civilizing process, Elias seems to have overlooked those dark recesses of the modern psyche that erupted into horrible daylight in the concentration camps." See also Buck-Morss (1978, pp. 187–189); Gouldner (1981, p. 418).
11. See particularly Mennell (1990); Goudsblom (1994); Fletcher (1995, 1997); Dunning and Mennell (1998); Van Krieken (1999); De Swaan (2001); Wacquant (2004); Dunning (2008, 2011).
12. For the critiques of the ambiguity of the concept of civilization, see Burkitt (1996) and for the counter-critiques of Burkitt, see Dunning and Mennell (1998).
13. For the discussion around the normativity of the concept of civilization, see particularly Delzescaux (2002, pp. 35–47); Heinich (2000, pp. 162–165).
14. See specifically Fletcher (1997, pp. 47–54) for the definition of violence in Elias's works.
15. According to De Swaan (2001, p. 269), "If decivilization may be described at the psychological and social level as 'regression' (into a prior, a more primitive, more disorganised stage) then this dyscivilization may be described in terms of 'regression in the service of the state'".
16. Likewise, according to Van den Bergh (2001, p. 3), "Decivilizing episodes occur within civilizing processes. To oppose decivilizing to civilizing processes is misleading also because it ignores the interconnections between civilizing processes at different levels, especially between the global/interstate and the intrastate levels."
17. See specifically Dunning and Mennell (1998) which demonstrates how Elias deals with the rise of Nazism and the Holocaust, and how this is relevant in the context of his theory of civilizing process. See, additionally, Dunning (2008, 2011).

18. Van Krieken (1999) convincingly argues that civilization and decivilization are not different processes and he demonstrates how Australian authorities took indigenous Australian children from their families in the name of civilization.
19. See, for example, Slocum (2005); Leveratto (2006); Algazi (2008); Hansen-Miller (2011).
20. See Elias and Dunning (1986) and the chapter 'Norbert Elias and leisure studies' by Malcolm et al. (2013).
21. For a general understanding of Haneke's cinema, see especially: Brunette (2010); Grundmann (2010); Price and Rhodes (2010); Speck (2010); Coulthard (2012). See also Haneke's article (Haneke 2010) in which he explains his ideas of the representation of violence in the media.
22. See particularly the following for the reviews of the movie: Price (2006); Aston (2010); Brunette (2010); Meyer (2010); Price and Rhodes (2010); Torner (2010).

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PART II

Strengths and Limits

CHAPTER 4

Violence and *Civilité*: The Ambivalences of the State

Florence Delmotte and Christophe Majastre

1 Introduction

According to John Keane, "among the paradoxes of this long century of violence is the paucity of reflections within contemporary political theory, including democratic theory, on the causes, effects and ethico-political implications of violence" (Keane 1996, p. 6). If Hannah Arendt offers one of the few striking exceptions, in another field Elias's "discussion of the strength—and weaknesses—of the so-called civilizing process …" is, as Keane (1996, p. 26) writes, "of vital importance to a theorization of violence and civil societies".

The interest expressed by Elias in the increase in incivilities and violence in the Weimar Republic retrospectively makes violence a clear political motive of his masterwork, *On the Process of Civilisation* ([1939] 2012), written while in exile in London in the second half of the 1930s. Elias himself more or less explicitly validated this interpretation later (Elias 2013). Indeed, the centrality of the violence issue is already quite

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obvious in the conclusion of the 1939 text (Elias 2012), where the author seems very concerned as he confronts the "constant danger of war" (Elias 2012, p. 488). One of Elias's originalities is to reverse the problem: instead of questioning the causes of growing (or persisting) political and social violence in German national society, he comes to question the general evolution from which Germany, if not Europe as a whole, seems to be diverging. As he writes later in *The Germans* (Elias 1996), what is definitely "astonishing and unique" in contemporary political societies is not the persistence or resurgence of violence, but rather, quite the opposite, namely, "the relatively high degree of non-violence that is characteristic of the social organizations of today" (Elias 1996, p. 174). This is the perspective from which Elias started studying the long-term evolution of individuals' behaviours and feelings, and changes in ways of thinking and in social and power structures in Europe—a study originally grounded in the handbooks and other treaties devoted to courtesy, *civilité* and politeness in different European countries from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century.

Elias points out particularly well that the state's monopoly of violence is an ambiguous innovation, that states are "positively dangerous instruments of pacification" (Keane). While within their boundaries states are, according to Elias, rather "peace-enforcing and peace-keeping agencies", inter-state relationships continue to be caught up in a *bellum omnium contra omnes*, for more and more powerful states force each other into an escalating spiral of extending or strengthening their positions of power. States are "two-sided" (Mennell 2004, p. 160). War, the essence of which is violence, therefore constantly threatens the non-violent civil conditions promised by the state monopoly of violence.

However, still according to Keane, a weakness in Elias's analysis would be to see the social danger concentrated quasi-exclusively in inter-state wars. The state is not deprived of ambivalence; the wars and colonization that it fosters are ample evidence of its destructive nature, a fact on which Elias particularly insists. Nevertheless, at the end of the day, its role seems to be considered, as in Thomas Hobbes's ([1651] 1909) or even in Carl Schmitt's ([1932] 2009) thoughts, as rather or even very "positive" for the pacification of civil society, if we look at social relations within states. Most of the time, Elias does not seem to consider that monopolizing the legitimate use of physical force (or claiming to do so) could *in itself* be a problem, a source of danger for civilians, for the people living on the state's territory.

His position seems to contrast greatly with that of a majority of the liberal authors such as John Locke, but also with another great twentieth-century thinker on these questions, Michel Foucault (1977),[1] who shows that the modern and contemporary state's control (and its potential or efficient violence) extends well beyond exceptional war contexts and well beyond military obligations demanded in these contexts. Does that mean that Elias, for his part, missed the point, by mostly insisting on "residual", "tolerable" (in our words) or "exceptional" state violence? Not really. Instead of considering "civilizing" (progress) or, its opposite, "decivilizing" (barbarism) to be part of the very *nature* of the state (or of modernity), Elias rather proposes a socio-historical investigation of the *conditions* in which the state can alternately or simultaneously play opposite roles in matters of violence[2] within the state society, including towards its own citizens or inhabitants. In "The Breakdown of Civilization", Elias points out that "civilizing processes and de-civilizing processes" often go "hand in hand" and the latter can outweigh the former, culminating in the Nazis' barbarity (Elias 1996, p. 308). This apparent "pathology" or German "exception" reveals at the same time, through the Nazis' attempt to destroy it, the "ethical" core of a process more "coldly" reconstructed in the 1930s text, namely, a more encompassing consciousness of other people's suffering and pain, that, depending on the context, can be fostered or, on the contrary, threatened by the state.

This chapter thus questions the ambivalence of the role given to the modern state in Elias's political work in matters of *civilité* and violence. It is set in the framework of an ongoing reflection on the irreducibility of the political to the state in Elias's thought (see Delmotte and Majastre 2017 and Majastre and Delmotte 2017), and consecutively on the way Elias's theory of the civilizing process invites us to think about *civilité* apart from, outside or beyond the nation state (Delmotte 2014). Some of Elias's late essays (Elias 1996, 2007b, 2010a, 2010b) definitively help us to understand better or complete his major opus, fine-tuning rather than refuting its statements regarding violence, *civilité* and the state. In our view, a comprehensive approach to interrelations between these three concepts also fosters the dialogue between Elias's historical sociology of the political and important related current issues in political theory and philosophy (see for instance Balibar 2010).[3] We ultimately submit that, despite its own ambiguities, not only does Elias's sociology stress that the state is far from always being a guardian of civil security; it also suggests that *civilité* cannot be reduced to the opposite of violence or to an attribute of a state-bounded community. To put it differently,

we assume in what follows a double reading of his work, including the *Process* but not limited to this text, dealing with the role of the state facing both violence and *civilité*. Without downgrading the strength and importance of the 1939 text's major these, we want to put forward what, elsewhere in this text and in later ones, challenges this thesis. One can see these challenging hypotheses only or mainly as betraying a kind of ambivalence, ambiguity or contradiction, especially as far as state violence and genocide are concerned (Burkitt 1996). We rather suggest that, while Elias's texts may be read as quite hesitant on these issues, this characteristic openness does not as much contribute to revealing obvious limits of the Eliasian theory as to hallmarking its originality and stimulating character.

2 State (Monopolies) and *Civilité* against Violence

That Elias puts great emphasis on the historical role of the state in pacifying social relations inside a given set of territorial boundaries cannot be denied. The stability of this social structure, as he puts it, is "one of the most prominent features of Western history" (Elias 2012, p. 350). To discover under what historical conditions such a large-scale pacification has been made possible and what its long-term consequences on the individual psyche are is indeed the very design of *On the Process of Civilisation*. This purpose leads him to look for a historical instance of a "successful" process of monopolization. Looking into French history, here, serves to sketch an archetypical historical trajectory against which other cases can be compared.[4] In what follows we show that Elias's emphasis on the historical role of the state as a reducer of violence also highlights some normatively problematic dimensions of the "process of civilization".

Although Elias's analysis is carefully sociological and stresses the processual and historical nature of every social phenomenon, including the emergence of the state and pacification of social relations, his reconstruction of such a crucial "moment" or phase in the delimitation of violence that is the institutionalization of *civilité* hints at a conceptual link between *civilité* and the state. Far from challenging the general model he proposes, we posit that the forms of violence that take place in a situation of state monopolization can be interpreted as part of a "normal" process of civilization, a part of the process of civilization itself. Indeed, the far-ranging regulation and sublimation of violence must necessarily—if we push this

interpretation to its limit—take place in a bounded civic community under the guidance of a state monopoly.

The above-mentioned conditions of pacification are summarized briefly in the first point of our development, where we focus on the "decisive" emergence of *civilité* in the transitional period from feudal to modern society. In the second point, we stress the forms of regulation and sublimation that are enforced once the state's monopolization of affairs is in place. Thus, we illustrate the carefully sociological vantage point that Elias develops on violence and more specifically the conflicts arising between the individual psyche and social structure as a driver of social change and "locomotive" of the civilization process. This historical and non-essentialist perspective notwithstanding, Elias's analysis of violence, when considered from the standpoint of its normative aspects, could seem close to the theses of some apologists of the state, such as Carl Schmitt and Hobbes. In the third point, we try to determine in what way and how far this apparent proximity is justified.

2.1 The State as Violence Reducer

The delimitation of violence that is produced by the imposition of a state monopoly over the use of legitimate physical force is of great importance in Elias's work. Indeed, this delimitation is a precondition for the gradual unfolding of the process of civilization *per se*. Like many other socio-historical accounts of the state, and in a very Weberian way, Elias describes this process of monopolization as occurring through the violent dispossession of the means of violence from private hands. In other words, the main driver of the process of monopolization is war-making between like-sized and (at first) "private" units. That is the apparent paradox that "without violent actions, without the motive forces of free competition, there would be no monopoly of force, thus no pacification, no suppression and control of violence over larger areas" (Elias 2012, p. 346).[5]

The outcome of a successful monopolizing process is thus described as a simultaneous suppression (*Zurückdrangung*) and control (*Regelung*) of the use of violence:

> … the discharge of affects in physical attack is limited to certain temporal and spatial enclaves. Once the monopoly of physical power has passed to central authorities, not every strong man can afford the pleasure of physical attack. This is now reserved to a few legitimised by the central authority

> (for example the police against the criminal), and to larger numbers only in exceptional times of war or revolution, in the socially legitimised struggle against internal or external enemies. (Elias 2012, p. 196)

In Elias's chronology, *civilité* takes over from medieval courtesy as the behavioural regulating principle that matches the now established monopoly of physical power. It is thus undoubtedly linked to the emergence of the state monopoly, if only in a historicized, not absolute way, as it represents only a particular equilibrium between the individual's psychic economy and the power structure. Elias stresses the pivotal nature of *civilité*: If "*[C]ourtoisie*, *civilité* and *civilisation* mark three stages of a social development, […] the actual change in the behaviour of the upper class, the development of the models of behaviour which would henceforth be called 'civilised' […] took place in the middle phase" (Elias 2012, p. 107).

The transition from courtesy to *civilité* is thus highly reflective of the more general historical preconditions that Elias had in mind regarding the relative suppression and control of violence. Of course, the civilizing process neither ends with *civilité*, nor with the successful monopolization of physical violence. Rather, the civilizing process *stricto sensu* takes place in the interplay between social structures and the individual's psychological structures. It can be regarded as a shift in the balance between external and internal individual controls in favour of the second.[6] Yet, along this underlying displacement, *civilité* presents itself as a decisive step because it implies a much more *stable* regulation of violent impulses, as is well illustrated by the contrast that Elias draws between *civilité* and the unrestrained expression of violence in the medieval upper classes.

In feudal societies, according to Elias, individuals present themselves with "a lesser degree of social regulation and binding of the life of drives" (2012, p. 189). The behavioural model of certain social groups—such as knights—rests on the unrestrained expression of aggressive impulses. The psychic structure behind such a behavioural model, according to Elias, corresponds to the particular stage of the division of social functions, in which no external authority can sanction and control the expression of these affects. In contrast, "The peculiar stability of the apparatus of psychological self-restraint that emerges as a decisive trait built into the habitus of every 'civilised' human being stands in the closest relationship to the monopolisation of physical force and the growing stability of the central organs of society", although modification of psychic economy usually takes time to adapt to new external constraints: the two aspects of the

evolution generally do not march together in time (2012, pp. 407–408). The stability of this habitus is severely conditioned by a relatively pacified social environment, a social and political context in which the dangers threatening the security of existence are predictable and reduced as much as possible. As much as the violent discharge of the aggressive impulse is necessary for the knight in medieval society, self-restraint is necessary for the "civilized" individual in a later stage of the process.

On the one hand, the difference between the habitus of a free knight and that of a "civilized" individual is not a difference in nature, but a difference of degree, a shift in the general direction towards stronger and more complex mechanisms of self-restraint. According to Olivier Agard (2009), for instance, the basic hypothesis of *On the Process of Civilisation* lies in this movement of intensification of constraints on the individual mind and Elias would amend and enrich this hypothesis only in later texts, especially in his studies on *The Germans* (1996). On the other hand, we can put forward that Elias already presents in the 1939 *On the Process of Civilisation* the emergence of *civilité* as bringing about a substantive transformation in the relation of the individual with itself, a transformation he never presented as being only "quantitative", in the sense of counting (only) "more" and "stronger" self-restraints[7]:

> In order to be really "courteous" by the standards of *civilité*, one was to some extent obliged to observe and pay attention to people and their motives. In this, too, a new relationship of person to person, a new form of integration is announced. (Elias 2012, p. 85)
>
> The increased tendency of people to observe themselves and others is one sign of how the whole question of behaviour was now taking on a different character: people moulded themselves and others more deliberately than in the Middle Age. […] All problems concerned with behaviour took on new importance. (2012, p. 86)

These quotes illustrate how far-reaching the transformation fostered by the successful monopolization of physical violence is. If we place it back in Elias's more general chronology, we can note that it also takes place in a process of the bounding and, later, nationalization of a community of individuals. The historical importance of *civilité* as a regulating principle rests above all on its capture by the emerging national elites linked to the established state monopoly. In the context of the emergence of the

modern states in Europe, at a time when "knightly society and the unity of the Catholic Church were disintegrating", that is, in a highly transitional period, it helped to shape a new ruling class in Europe (Elias 2012, p. 61). In Elias's model, where the masses gradually take over behavioural norms from the ruling class, it forms one of the underlying conditions of processes of "democratization" of the monopolies that would culminate in the formation of the fully-fledged nation state few centuries later.

In the second point, we focus on how the process of monopolization entails the regulation of violence through its displacement and official sanctioning by the state.

2.2 The State as Violence Regulator

If we turn to the concrete description of the reduction of violence and production of security by the state, we can see that the "control" (*Regelung*) of violence has more than one meaning. First, the use of violence must be sanctioned by a central authority that decides on its "legitimacy". Elias does not use the term, but it well refers here to Elias's central idea that the state (its rulers) gained stable power in order to regulate violence through (state) law and to ensure the binding force of the law (see Woodiwiss 2005, pp. 11–15). Thus, a crucial distinction between legitimate struggle against an (internal or external) enemy and illegitimate private uses of violence is introduced (or, more exactly, dramatically reinforced). Second and consequently, the use of violence becomes generally more predictable: "The monopolisation of physical violence, the concentration of arms and armed troops under one authority, makes the use of violence more or less calculable […]" (Elias 2012, p. 411). Physical violence is confined to "enclaves" where it is *subject to certain rules*, for example, in wars or, differently, in sport. Third, it is the very outcome of the monopolization by a central authority that physical violence also becomes subject to *self-control* within the self-regulation of individuals' drives, only after, and sometimes long after, new norms of behaviours have been imposed from outside the individuals by a new ruling class using etiquette books or state law (as far as violence is concerned).

In all of these meanings, violence is displaced rather than suppressed. Above all, it is displaced towards the outside of the state in the waging of war against an external enemy. It can be so precisely because there is, at the international level, no legal monopoly of violence, but rather, and for this very reason, an unavoidable tendency among states to compete

against one another in the frame of a global struggle for hegemony at the end. In *The Germans* and other late essays ("The Fishermen in the Maelström", 2007b, for example), Elias points out "the duality of the normative codes" that characterizes state building. Briefly, pacification inside states goes along with multiplied, exacerbated violence between states—an argument that would be endorsed by Charles Tilly when he stressed the fact that "interpersonal violence outside of the state's sphere has generally declined" is intimately connected with the fact that, at the same time, "the world has grown more warlike": "in most of the world, the activity of states has created a startling contrast between the violence of the state's sphere and the relative non-violence of civilian life away from the state" (Tilly 1992, p. 68). For his part, Elias points out that the state survival unit is always at the same time a destructive unit for its enemies, as well as for its members (soldiers and civilian victims of external wars). That means that even *physical* violence does not *disappear*, although it severely *decreases*, in the state system. In the best cases, most of (pure physical) violence is, in one (German) word, *enkaserniert* ("put in the barracks") and, (only) in that sense, "disappears". It also means that the division between inside and outside security matters is not so clear-cut.

Elias does not minimize the inner conflicts that might arise in the course of this learning process. He acknowledges that, to an extent, the violence that is taken away from individuals is turned inwards, moving "the battlefield […] within", as "the passionate affects, that can no longer directly manifest themselves in the relationship *between* people, often struggle no less violently *within* the individual against this supervising part of themselves" (2012, p. 414). Thus, the development of a "super-ego", "a controlling agency", is, according to Elias, a historical and social phenomenon that must be explained, as much as the "inner" violence it entails, in relation to the social structure, and, in later essays, to the specific features of the structure of (political) authority (see "Civilization and Violence: On the State Monopoly of Physical Violence and its Transgression" in Elias 1996, pp. 171–297).

What is suggested is that not all violence must be regarded as pathological. Indeed, the successful displacement of violence towards the outside of the state, in relations between enemy states, on the one hand, and inside the individual, on the other hand, signals a "successful" process of civilization (whatever its moral sense might be, thus referring here to the most neutral, descriptive acceptations of what could be a "successful", "normal" process). In this sense, just as war "is not the opposite of

peace" (2012, p. 488), violence is not the opposite of *civilité*, and *civilité* is not at all the opposite of violence. Court society was evidently extremely "violent", although violence of *etiquette* was not exactly physical violence (Elias 2006, pp. 86–126).[8] It proves that the persistence of violence in other forms is indeed highly characteristic of the process of civilization.

In a way, and although Elias insists on the dynamic, historical and necessarily unstable nature of interactions between the social structure and the individual psyche, we can see that the regulation of violence also involves a more substantive transformation of the ways in which violence is expressed in daily life. This is where, as we show in the following section, Elias's thesis joins some normative postulates about the ontology of the state that brings him close to some theorists and apologists of the state.

2.3 A Positive Ontology of the State?

We now ask if Elias's thesis, when examined from a certain angle that steps back from its sociological foundations, does not lead him, like it or not, to attribute to the state an irreducible originality and to instantiate it as the only form of integration able to sublimate and contain violence in a successful, progress-oriented way. This reading brings Elias close to other classic accounts of *civilité* understood as freedom from violence, such as that of Thomas Hobbes. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes puts forward the idea of an *ultima ratio* as a justification of state and civil government. Chapter XVII, "Of the Causes, Generation, and Definition of a Common-Wealth", for instance, opens with these words: "The finall Cause, End, or Designe of men, (who naturally love Liberty, and Dominion over others,) in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves, (in which we see them live in Common-wealths) is the foresight of their own preservation, and of a more contented life thereby" (Hobbes 1909, p. 128). When we look at the conditions that Elias explores in order to foster the process of civilization, we can say that the provision of security by the state is a crucial dimension: it allows the development of behavioural norms, as the individual's existence is no longer threatened by immediate physical attack. When contrasting feudal society with later stages in the development of state monopolies, Elias depicts in Hobbesian terms a society where "the future was relatively uncertain, even for those who had fled the 'world', only God and the loyalty of a few people who held together had any permanence. Fear reigned everywhere; one had to be on one's guard all the time" (Elias 2012, p. 189). In contrast, the security-providing function of

the state further enables the development of a civic community that would be unthinkable otherwise.

To be provocative, we can also put the substantive transformation of violence pointed out by Elias in parallel with Carl Schmitt's ontology of the state, where the emergence of the state would mark a transformation from unbridled, unbounded and destructive interpersonal violence to limited, codified and legally sanctioned violence (both within and between states). For instance, in his 1963 preface to *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt states, "… the classical state achieved something totally implausible: establishing inner peace and excluding enmity as a concept of law. It succeeded in eliminating the feud, an institution of medieval law; ending the religious civil wars of the 16th and 17th centuries, in which each camp believed itself to be particularly justified to wage war; and enforcing tranquility, security, and order within its borders" (Schmitt 2009 (1963), p. 11).[9] For both authors, the transformation from private violence to sanctioned, legitimate and public forms of violence is a criterion of progress towards civilization—a transformation only the state appears able to perform. As Schmitt puts it in what could have been an Eliasian expression, "the domestication and clear delimitation of war make enmity relative. Each instance of such relativizing is a great advance towards more humanity."[10]

For Schmitt, however, this containment supposes a community of states (as opposed to a stateless universal union of people) that allows a demarcation between the friend and the enemy (Schmitt 2009 (1963), p. 52). Therefore, universalistic values and a normative set of principles, such as human rights, can only threaten this demarcation and, if enforced, unleash unlimited violence (Schmitt 2009 (1963), p. 51). Here Elias's and Schmitt's respective visions of post-national integration reveal a clear divergence that is not reducible to an opposition between (Eliasian) optimism and (Schmittian) pessimism. As we shall show later, in the "Changes in the We-I Balance" (1987), Elias insists that the discourse of human rights, its progressive institutionalization towards the end of the twentieth century and its increasingly efficient use at the international level signal that the locus of identification is necessarily displaced beyond (and above) the state, announcing a new stage in the process of civilization. Hence, the divergence lies in Elias's refusal to follow the logical consequences of Schmitt's conceptualization: that the entanglement of violence in a set of norms is made possible only by the state in its "classical" form.

3 State Violence against *Civilité*

So far, we have focused mainly on Elias's central work *On the Process of Civilisation*. This focus leads us to make two general points or provisional conclusions. First, Elias's original insistence on the reduction of violence might have led him to omit some more problematic forms of violence that would come to the fore in the twentieth century, that is to say, forms of violence that are at the same time on a larger scale, more extreme and fostered by the states themselves. As we shall show in the first point below, Elias's reflections on the Holocaust that were published later in his life would constitute, to a certain extent, an amendment of his theses of the thirties (Agard 2009), but mostly, in our view, an innovative extension of these, (at least partly) refuting the basic interpretation we have just presented about the role of the state in matters of violence. Second, a tension runs through Elias's *On the Process of Civilisation* between a carefully thought-out, historical and sociological model and a model that remains partly indebted to a tradition of ontologizing the state as a unique and original phenomenon. Discussing it is not within the scope of this chapter, but we can say that this latter model is counterbalanced by the former. Considering the strongly historical dimension of Eliasian thought, the civilizing process does not culminate in the state. It even less begins with the state. This is a second reason why the concept and history of *civilité*, on the one hand, and the concept and history of the state, on the other hand, cannot be confused. In the second point of this section, an "ethical" definition of the concept of *civilité* will therefore be presented. This normative concept of *civilité* is more open, less dependent on the state, partly built on the critique of the uncivilized character or the decivilizing features of the modern state. Far from being state-centred, this ethical definition, based on a growing empathy and ability of an enlarged self-detachment, is marked by a certain "cosmopolitanism". At the same time, *civilité* in this strong meaning is highly compatible with the "real" historical trajectory and with the relational reality of both state and *civilité* concepts and social experiences that have been investigated within the frame of Elias's historical sociology of the civilizing process(es).

3.1 About Nazism and Uncivil State Violence

In his essay written around the time of the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem and critically titled "The Breakdown of Civilization" (Elias 1996, pp. 299–402), Elias directly confronts the extermination of the Jews

by the Nazis during World War II. He specifies that it "was not by any means the only regression to barbarism in the civilized societies of the twentieth century" but "perhaps the deepest" (Elias 1996, p. 308). What matters therefore is "to investigate the conditions in twentieth-century civilizations, the *social* conditions, which have favoured barbarisms of this kind and which might favour them again in the future". For Elias, "The Eichmann trial has momentarily lifted the veil which hides the darker side of civilized human beings" (1996, pp. 303–304). Among the revelations that come out of the Holocaust, we should like to point out the sense in which *civilité* could be concerned by the very breakdown or regression itself, and how state violence is invoked in order to characterize and explain such breakdown.

According to Elias, there are indeed different kinds of wars, some of which are more threatening to civilization than others:

> Every war was clearly a regression to barbarism. Up till then, however, European wars had always been relatively limited regressions. Certain minimum rules of civilized conduct were generally still observed even in the treatment of prisoners of war. With a few exceptions, a kernel of self-esteem which prevents the senseless torturing of enemies and allows identification with one's enemy in the last instance as another human being, together with compassion for his suffering, did not entirely lapse. In the attitude of the National Socialists towards the Jews none of this survived. At least on a conscious level, the torment, suffering and death of Jews did not appear to mean more than that of flies. (Elias 1996, p. 309)

These sentences are extremely important for the civilizing processes theory as a whole. Elias points out that Nazism and genocide reveal negatively, with particular acuity due to their relatively exceptional character, the *ethical* core of the civilizing process, which Elias did not really mention in the 1939 text[11] and to which we shall return later, namely, the "growth of mutual identification" of most modern people with their fellow human beings, "simply *as* fellow human beings" (Mennell 1992, p. 248). Here we are forced to admit that the civilizing process cannot be reduced to pacification within the state (although inner peace largely remains—or became, to be more exact, as we said that the civilizing process did not begin with the state—a kind of condition for its continuation). It can even less be reduced to civilization of manners strictly speaking. As ironically pointed out by Konrad Jarausch (2004), the Nazis had not necessarily lost their manners at table (nor necessarily beat their children, etc.).

Indeed, something else, something "more", civilization in a different, more "progress-oriented" meaning, crumbled or collapsed in the Nazi period: something like generalized human "mutual identification", which is certainly neither innate, once again, nor achieved, but mostly owes its characteristics to centuries of civilizing processes.[12]

Now, our core question is: to what extent is the civilizing role of the modern state brought into question by the Nazi "barbarity", or to what extent could the state be partly responsible for the "breakdown" of the human being's self-esteem? We can address the question by evoking Elias's and Zigmunt Bauman's respective positions (De Swaan 2001). Elias wrote about "breakdown". If we caricature his position, the Holocaust is, in his opinion, a paradox, a paradoxical development in the civilizing process, whereas Bauman considered it to be just the reverse, a paroxysm, for "the modern era has been founded on genocide, and was proceeded through more genocide" (Bauman 1993, p. 227). But Elias is not an anti-Bauman before the fact. He (more) explicitly recognized that civilizing and decivilizing processes were partly due to the same causes. The differentiation of social functions and lengthening of the chains of interdependence, for instance, called for social pacification. But they were also required to make possible the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis and its rational, bureaucratic organization, including the emotional detachment of an Eichmann establishing timetables for trains to Auschwitz (Arendt 2006) and the organization of the mass killing in the gas chambers (Elias 1996, p. 307). If modernity does not create or aggravate barbarism and violence, it might rationalize, bureaucratize and organize it.

Nevertheless, one of Elias's tacit assumptions in his theory of civilization is that the state and its monopolization of violence (and taxation) "will lead to more civilized modes of intercourse and expression, i.e. a lessening of all forms of violent behavior, *state violence included*" (De Swaan 2001). The "normal" civilizing process (namely, the process in which civilizing trends prevail) entails an "equalization" process and a functional democratization process characterized by minimal equality, equality before the law, increasing equalization in living standards, and growing mutual identification. What Nazism (among other regressions) proved, De Swaan contends, against Elias's theory or main interpretation of it, is that the twin processes of "the monopolization of the means of the violence *and* the overall civilization of society" could be "pried apart": in a "dyscivilizing society" (De Swaan), an overall degree of civilization seems

to prevail, and at the same time "the full violence of the state is unleashed against specific categories in well demarcated local, temporal, social and mental compartments" (De Swaan 2001, p. 276).[13]

We should like to make two additional remarks regarding the role of the state in the "breakdown of civilization" that Elias analyzed in *The Germans*. The breakdown must of course be explained in the light of certain "social conditions" that could be found in numerous other contexts (humiliating military defeats, economic and political crisis, anti-Semitism and xenophobia, etc.). It must be considered more broadly in relation to many non-(typically) German aspects: France, Great Britain and the United States experienced racism and imperialism, and a complex set of practices, including science, technological innovations and "massification", gave birth in these contexts to a culture based on the general idea that "we" are superior and dominant. Nevertheless, Nazism, war, concentration camps and, above all, genocide seem to have had something to do with a specific German national habitus and, according to Elias, with the specificity of the German nation state's historical trajectory. This trajectory and habitus would, notably, have been characterized not by strength but, on the contrary, by *weaknesses* of a state monopoly of violence that had been consolidated very late and shakily, compared to the other great European powers (see the enduring institution of duelling in the Wilhelmine Empire, which tolerated and encouraged interpersonal private violence in some contexts, in Elias 1996, pp. 44–64). In Germany, the lack of a state monopoly, or a state monopoly which was too feeble for too long or too young and immature, yielded a state that was not able to democratize in time and thus unable to really "civilize" society, fostering the need for authoritarian rule and highly fanciful political discourses such as Hitler's (Mennell 1996, p. 112). After such a historically hesitant monopoly crumbled under the Weimar Republic, which is described as the most decivilizing period regarding the growth of "private" violence (Fletcher 1997), Hitler restored a kind of highly effective monopoly of the means of violence.[14] This very monopoly finally permitted the genocide to be organized so efficiently in a context of war, and in the frame of a rather innovative regime or system, hardly comparable to other and former, even the most authoritarian ones, according to Arendt in her famous opus, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1958), centred on Nazism and Stalinism.

For his part, in *The Germans* Elias partly recycles the *Sonderweg* theme by considering the peculiarity of the German state and habitus formation to be of major importance. That argumentative strategy contributes

to exonerating the "normal" state-building path *partially*.[15] At the same time, Elias firmly insists on the guilty incredulity and passivity of the other European powers witnessing the rise and crimes of Nazism that they were neither able nor keen to prevent. After the tragedy of the First World War, Western leaders' errors about what should "really" be realist politics in the thirties were obviously at fault, but according to Elias their failure to prevent the tragedy is also to be seen in relation to their more global misunderstanding of the civilizing process itself:

> Contemporaries did not then conceive of civilization as a condition which, if it is to be maintained or improved, requires a constant effort based on a degree of understanding of how it works. Instead, like their "rationality", they took it for granted as one of their permanent attributes, an aspect of their inborn superiority: once civilized, always civilized. (Elias 1996, p. 314)

A second point about what happened under the Nazi regime should also be considered in relation to the state and violence issue. It concerns the efforts made by the Nazis to transform Jews into "enemies" of the German people and justify "war" against them—a very costly and "irrational" war that, along with the simultaneous opening of several fronts, caused, according to Elias, the Nazis to lose the more conventional, inter-state, war (Elias 1996). The project of extermination that unfolded starting from *Mein Kampf* firstly required a diminution of the feelings of identification with the Jews that many non-Jewish Germans had developed. The Nuremberg Laws adopted for that purpose prove that the Nazis had assimilated the need to legalize their apparently unbridled violence towards the Jews. The decisions taken early to remove Jews first to ghettos and then to camps, most of which were situated *outside* Germany, prove the necessity of (hiding and) turning genocide into a war with an enemy that culminated in the creation of extermination camps *outside* the state's territory. Last but not least, the Nazis remained curiously apprehensive of German public opinion regarding the treatment of the Jews. Of course that does not minimize the violence of the Nazi state at all. Rather, it shows that more or less "civilized" standards, standards more or less related to state building, such as shunting violence to the side of war and external conflict, are not so easy to ignore and dismantle, for even the Nazi regime had to come to terms with these standards within German society. At the same time, such standards do not by themselves guarantee civilization at all. By singling it out, an Eliasian reading helps *situate* Nazi state violence instead of confusing

it with the very "nature" of the modern state, or on the contrary, with its very negation. Rather, Nazi violence appears to be an example of state violence resulting from specific historical (de)civilizing processes that could have been developing elsewhere in other ways and should be explained (Elias 1996, p. 304).

3.2 Civilité *against and beyond State (Violence)*

A core hypothesis of this chapter is that the most adamant denials of civility envisioned by Elias himself—first among them being Nazi violence against Jews—deeply question the civilizing role supposedly attributed to the state by the civilizing process theory. These denials also consequently complicate and enrich the significations of the terms "civilization" and "*civilité*". As we have recalled above, *civilité* is usually understood from the 1939 text as a behaviour-regulating principle that was crucial to the development of court society in Europe and thus intimately associated with state building and the specific elites it required and fostered (Elias 2012, p. 61). In this last section, we should like to stress that *civilité* can be understood by Elias as something more demanding, ethically speaking, and slightly different from this first historical meaning.

In our view, the analysis of the decivilizing processes proposed in *The Germans* reveals, by negative example, the normative, evaluative, prescriptive or moral meaning that Elias often claimed to deny the term "civilization". The 1961–62 text on the "Breakdown of Civilization" describes indeed what collapsed or came close to collapsing in Europe between 1933 and 1945: not the state, definitely not the links of interdependence, not all kinds of reserve or politeness or civilized manners, but this capacity for mutual identification. "The breakdown of civilization", moreover, provides precious insights into the very conditions that threaten the most progressive, desirable aspects of civilization. At the end of the day, this text clearly contributes to downgrading, if not the importance of the internal pacification, secure existence and predictability of danger to which the state gives rise, at least the bounded and sovereign community nature of the modern state, which allowed such pacification but proved unable to guarantee it definitively and for every citizen.

As we have pointed out, what crumbled under Nazism and in World War II was, in a nutshell, the growing ability to put oneself in someone else's place, referring to a civilized self-esteem that Elias does not mention in *On the Process of Civilisation*. This mutual identification very clearly has

something to do with compassion and empathy, which have no reason to be limited by the borders of a political unit, survival unit or community. On the contrary, such feelings are revealed precisely when they concern strangers, prisoners of war or supposed enemies—in a word "the other", someone from outside one's political community or survival unit. The widening of the scope of identification circles mentioned by Elias and his followers thus directly participates in an enlarging consciousness of the self that defines a kind of cosmopolitanism in Elias's late texts. Elias himself did not contribute so much in elucidating precisely the factors that favoured or on the contrary prevented the development of empathy feelings according to the development of different forms of *civilité* and the decrease of violence in long-term world history. The roles of cities and urban models, for instance, and even more of religion(s) (Muchembled 2008) were certainly under-investigated by Elias, who obviously focused on the state. But what is sure in our view is that Elias's cosmopolitanism (although still quite statist) is at the end of the day incompatible with the Schmittian model of the political and the state we evoked at the beginning. It is indeed doubtful that Elias could have agreed with a conception founded on the organic unity of a people, given that he firmly and consistently rejected any kind of nationalism (see for example Elias 1996, p. 315). But Elias's cosmopolitanism also seems incompatible with Schmitt's view that the "classical state", able to distinguish between external friends and enemies, is the ultimate guarantor of a "civilized" treatment of the other (see Schmitt 2009 (1963), p. 11).

The development of modern political communities ruled by law obviously favoured the evolution towards a *civilité* understood as a broadened awareness founded on both norms and particular psycho-affective capacities. However, the question is whether the state model does or does not give its own inherent limits (those of sovereignty, for instance) to this evolution. In an Eliasian perspective, the state model itself rather calls for overstepping these or, better said, its own limits. In other words, the process of civilization always described without a beginning and an end is also to be considered as having no ultimate "foundation" in the nation state or in anything else. In his *Civilité and Violence* (2010), French philosopher Etienne Balibar gives *civilité* a *negative* foundation only, in opposition to certain forms of violence. Elias, for his part, might have been inclined to see one more time, in the constantly increasing interconnectedness of the human network, the very functional motive of considering *civilité* as an open relational concept instead of a closed community-based one.

4 Conclusions

In Elias's more political texts, especially those related to violence in international relations, the term *civilité* seldom occurs and the need for a world state is for its part a recurrent issue. In some passages, from the conclusion of *On the Process of Civilisation* until "The Fishermen in the Maelström" (1981), the very survival of mankind in the nuclear era seems to be contingent on such a state's existence. Establishing a global monopoly of violence would be the only way to prevent ultimate destructive violence and put an end to the global war that partially results from state building, as already advocated by Rousseau.[16] According to Elias, without a compelling force—a military monopoly—international law would be unable to pacify international relations (Elias 2007b, pp. 138–150), which, for that reason, are not civilized or civilizing, but, on the contrary, constantly threatening. In those passages, Elias seems rather close to the eighteenth-century cosmopolitanism that was built against and at the same time upon Thomas Hobbes's model of sovereignty.[17]

Challenging the global state solution to fight against global violence, another interpretation of Elias's "reality-congruent" cosmopolitanism can be found at the end of "Changes in the We-I Balance" (1987), where Elias carefully evokes human rights, instead of the quite illusory solution of a global world state.[18] He put particular emphasis on the rise of individual rights against state prerogative related to violence:

> In speaking of human rights, we say that the individual as such […] is entitled to rights that limit the state's power over the individual, regardless of the laws of that state. These rights are generally thought to include the individual's right to seek accommodation or work where he or she wishes […]. Another well-known human right is protection of the individual against imprisonment by the state unless legitimised by public judicial procedures. (pp. 206–207)

He finally insists:

> Perhaps it has not yet been stated clearly enough that human rights include the right of freedom from the use of physical force, and the right to decline to use or threaten to use force in the service of another. […] The transition to the primacy of the state in relation to clan and tribe meant an advance of individualisation. [T]he rise of humanity to become the dominant survival unit also marks an advance of individualisation. As a human being an

> individual has rights that even the state cannot deny him or her. We are only at an early stage of the transition to the most comprehensive stage of integration, and the elaboration of what is meant by human rights is just beginning. But freedom from the use and threat of violence [in the service of another] may so far have received too little attention as some of the rights which, in course of time—and contrary to the opposing tendencies of states—will have to be asserted for the individual in the name of humanity. (2010a, pp. 207–208)

To conclude, the co-reading of the *Process* with later essays and other sociology-of-knowledge texts such as "Involvement and Detachment" (2007a) stresses that *civilité* from its very origin should not be reduced to an attribute of power for a ruling upper class, or a set of norms, rights and obligations coming to bind people to a definite historical, political community pacified through the state's monopoly of physical force. It could be the starting point of another paper to show how since the emergence of court society, *civilité* has also always had something to do with the development of an observation method aimed at managing social relations and conflicts in contexts of social and institutional uncertainty, a method that potentially encourages self-detachment and the recognition of interconnectedness in a quasi-sociological perspective (Elias 2006, pp. 116–126). In this relational meaning, *civilité* reminds us of the initial conditions of a critical and reflexive approach to the political and might enable its own questioning. According to Elias, that is what the increasing claims about human rights have been doing since the end of the twentieth century. These claims do not only signify the further progression of individualization. They are also tentative signs of a developing common "sense of responsibility" for the fate of others far beyond the borders of one's own country or continent. And both could have emancipating effects, including with regard to state violence.

Notes

1. For more about juxtaposing Elias's and Foucault's theories, see Spierenburg (1984), Van Krieken (1990) and Mennell (1992, p. 58).
2. According to Jonathan Fletcher, "what Elias actually means when he uses the term violence is still unclear" and "violence can only be defined in context". At the same time, we agree with Fletcher that Elias first and foremost "refers to physical force when employing the term violence", especially regarding the role of state controls and monopolies (Fletcher

1997, p. 47). Keane, for his part, defines violence "crudely" as "any uninvited but intentional act of physically violating the body of a person who previously had lived 'in peace'" (Keane 1996, p. 6).

3. We have already been trying to foster such a dialogue between Elias's historical sociology and political philosophy on the topic of European integration and post-national citizenship (Delmotte 2002, 2007, 2012).
4. In other words, we are maybe here a little bit more hesitant or reserved than Dépelteau, Passiani and Mariano, although we share their "impression" and agree with them when they write: "It is true that Elias made distinctions between the developments of France, Great Britain, and Germany. However […], he proposed a general theory of 'civilizing processes'. In this respect, it is also true that Elias gave the impression that there is one 'civilizing process', and that in order to be 'civilized' a society would have to go through something similar to what happened in France and Great Britain" (Dépelteau et al. 2013, p. 52).
5. We can note that, for Elias, this intricacy of war making and pacification is paradoxical only if a moral judgement is cast from the standpoint of "civilized" individuals. Indeed, trying to cast such a judgment is misleading, the product of a "subjectivist or partisan view of the past" through which "we usually block our access to the elementary formative regularities and mechanisms, to the real structural history and sociogenesis of historical formations" (Elias 2012, p. 346).
6. In this respect, Elias remains well within the line of classical sociologists such as Durkheim (2002), and shares with the latter a concern for the potential inner conflicts that may arise from the discrepancy or non-coincidence between internal and external structures.
7. As early as 1939, Elias had clarified his point about the importance of qualitative evolution in manners and controls, an evolution he sees as more complex than de-multiplication and reinforcement of the (self-)controls. See his letter to Raymond Aron (in Joly and Deluermoz 2010). In this respect his thought has been remarkably pursued by the work of Cas Wouters about "informalization" (2008).
8. Here, Elias appears to fail to think out fully the relationship between physical violence and symbolic violence as understood by Pierre Bourdieu, that is to say, a form of constraint that "rests on an unconscious accordance between mental and objective structures" (Bourdieu 2012, p. 239). Bourdieu's central suggestion is precisely that, in order to produce a sociological theory of the state, the Weberian (and Eliasian) priority of physical violence must be reversed. In a nutshell, it is the monopolization of symbolical violence that constitutes, in Bourdieu's view, the central process that makes pacification possible (and, crucially, usually enables the state to avoid using physical violence): "*L'État est doté d'un instrument de constitu-*

tion de la paix intérieure, une forme de cela-va-de-soi, d'un taken for granted collectif à l'échelle d'un pays" (Bourdieu 2012, p. 268).

9. Authors' translation of "*dem klassischen Staat war etwas ganz Unwahrscheinliches gelungen: in seinem Innern Frieden zu schaffen und die Feindschaft als Rechtsbegriff auszuschließen. Es war ihm gelungen, die Fehde, ein Institut des mittelalterlichen Recht, zu beseitigen, den konfessionellen Bürgerkriegen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts, die auf beiden Seiten als besonders gerechte Kriege geführt wurden, eine Ende zu machen und innerhalb seines Gebietes Ruhe, Sicherheit und Ordnung herzustellen.*"
10. Authors' translation of "*Die Hegung und klare Begrenzung des Krieges enthält eine Relativierung der Feindschaft. Jede solche Relativierung ist ein großer Fortschritt im Sinne der Humanität.*"
11. Talking about "ethics" is not very Eliasian. For the French political theorist Philippe Raynaud (2013), Elias was, however, consciously moved by the same questions about the ethical and legal significance of the development of civility concurrently with Western state building as Hume, Rousseau and Kant (Raynaud 2013, p. 246).
12. For once, it is hardly possible *not* to validate morally, in terms of progress, such a "progressive", although relative and reversible, trend. Better stated, the growth of mutual identification and empathy is something that *can* be morally validated and this possibility is obviously validated by Elias himself. To be clear, the point is not about an innate character of empathy or compassion, qualities that are learned in any event and evolve in line with the standards of behaviour and feelings. The point is that the civilizing process would have been marked little by little by a widening scope of identification due to the growing repulsion to death and suffering of people increasingly remote and different from "us". "We watch football, not gladiatorial contests," Elias wrote to sum up such an evolution in "The Loneliness of the Dying" (2010b, p. 4) (the title of which does not precisely suggest a blind optimism about social change, by the way).
13. In the text "The expulsion of the Huguenots from France", first published in 1935, Elias shows the enduring risk of personal use of legitimate violence, namely by a Catholic king against the Protestant (Agard 2009). However, the episode relates to a very ancient period, that of the state's inception.
14. Of course, we can wonder, for example with Martin Broszat (1981), if the Nazi regime was really a "state" dictatorship or rather a party dictatorship.
15. Wacquant's analysis of the decivilizing processes at work in the black ghettos in some American cities gives another example of valuing, through the negative example, the "normal" trajectory of the state (Wacquant 2004). Decivilizing is largely envisioned by the French sociologist as a de-pacification, a resurgence of private violence and rise in killings due directly to the

withdrawal of the state, first from education and law enforcement (schools and police). State violence against citizens in these areas is of course noted but the emphasis on the decivilizing penal or "American" model of the state helps to validate, by the contrast that it creates, the civilizing social or "European" model of the state (Castel 2003) that would be currently weakening or disappearing. Moreover, Wacquant suggests that the decivilizing processes at work in the ghettos go as far as to cause the disintegration or shortening of interdependence chains, the growth of which is a kind of driver or *causes* of the civilizing process. For instance, in black American ghettos, decivilizing processes caused by the withdrawal of the state favour the return of an informal economy, people not daring to move out of their immediate neighbourhood, and so on.

16. "Since each of us is in the civil state with his fellow citizens and in the state of nature with all the rest of the world, we have forestalled private wars only to ignite general ones, which are a thousand times more terrible; and [by] uniting ourselves to several men, we really become the enemies of the human race," Rousseau writes in his *Abstract of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre's Plan for Perpetual Peace* (1761, 1995), the direct opposite of what Schmitt will write. As we have been trying to demonstrate, Elias's position is more ambiguous.
17. See, for example, the Abbé de Saint-Pierre's *Plan for Perpetual Peace* ([1713] 1987). More broadly, this cosmopolitanism conceives of a political entity enlarged to the borders of the human community, a citizenship that, although universal, is still based on belonging to a political community with which one should be identified.
18. Elias also could have written: "Deadly danger to any civilization is no longer likely to come from without (Arendt 1958, p. 302). However, Arendt's warning is indeed much more explicit about the dangers of a world government: "For it is quite conceivable, and even within the realm of practical political possibilities, that one fine day a highly organized and mechanized humanity will conclude democratically—namely by majority decision—that for humanity as a whole it would be better to liquidate certain parts thereof" (Arendt 1958, pp. 298–299).

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CHAPTER 5

Elias's Civilizing Process and Janus-Faced Modernity

François Dépelteau

1 Introduction

What is the relevance of Elias's theory of the "civilizing process" when it comes to explaining our relationship to violence in modernity? To answer to this question I use a pragmatic approach rather than a Popperian one. The goal is less to corroborate or refute the theory than to work on it as a sociological approach, or as a set of foci, questions, conceptual and methodological tools built and used to improve our understanding of some social processes. It means trying to interpret the work in the correct way, by analyzing and comparing it to other views and empirical events, and—if and when needed—by adapting it, reshaping it in order to improve it.

I am working on specific Elias texts where evolving ideas were presented at different times of his long career. In this case, I focus primarily on the book *The Civilizing Process*, even if I also use other texts such as *The Germans* where relevant. Other texts on or around Elias are also utilized, always in relation to the central question mentioned above.

In spite of the intentions of Elias and the views presented by other competent readers, I think his explanations have little interest if and when they are considered as a general theory of "civilizing processes". His work

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becomes more pertinent for the understanding of specific "civilizing processes" in modern and Western states such as France and Great Britain. Like any other sociological explanations, they become much more fruitful if we see them as being limited and incomplete explanations of contextualized social processes. In fact, sociological texts and theories should be seen as endless works in progress which are always related to specific (rather than universal) social processes, or as imperfect pieces of a moving puzzle which will never be completed.

Besides, like any other explanations in sociology, Elias's ideas become dogmatic when someone tries to defend them as others would defend a territory or a church against what is perceived as an attack, or when some people want to impose their theory as a Kuhnian paradigm. This attitude should be rejected in favour of critical and constructive comparisons between theories where the goal is not to fight for one theory, but to try to answer crucial and pragmatic questions such as: What is it? How does it work? What is the relevance of this theory, concept or method to understanding these social processes?

In this spirit, I will propose limited, incomplete results. This chapter is also a work in progress that I initiated in previous publications, especially the text written with my colleagues Passani and Mariano.[1]

The first thing to do when we work on one theory is to define it in the most accurate way. We need to know what is worked on. This is a necessity when we want to see what should be preserved, modified or discarded. Such initial definition also allows the readers to see where the analyst misunderstood the theory or neglected important aspects of it. By encouraging discussions, this initial work helps to better understand the theory and the social reality it is intended to explain.

2 Elias on Violence and the "Civilizing Process"

Elias's theory is founded on a dark picture of medieval society:

> Rapine, battle, hunting of people and animals—all these were vital necessities which, in accordance with the structure of society, were visible to all. And thus, for the mighty and strong, they formed part of the pleasures of life. (Elias 2000, p. 162)

Elias used war hymns or anecdotes to illustrate the wild cruelty of the "barbaric" "warrior societies", such as this story reported by a "cleric":

> He spends his life [we read of a knight] in oppressing widows and orphans. He takes particular pleasure in mutilating the innocent. In a single monastery, that of the black monks of Sarlat, there are 150 men and women who hands he has cut off or whose eyes he has put out. And his wife is just as cruel. She helps him with his executions. It even gives her pleasure to torture the poor women. She had their breasts hacked off or their nails torn off so that they were incapable of work. (Elias 2000, p. 163)

Elias knew his sources "may have exaggerated the details" (Elias 2000, p. 163), and that "there is no zero point" in terms of external control and self-restraint in any group at any time (Elias 2000, p. 181). Nevertheless, he used this representation of the Middle Ages as a contrast highlighting the new "expressions of feeling" (Elias 2000, p. 181) towards violence in the "civilized" society. He proposed an impressionist comparison where the behaviour standards of the "warriors", as the "secular ruling class" of medieval society, is the "starting-point" "to illustrate the overall pattern" (Elias 2000, p. 162) of the "civilizing process".

In spite of differences between social strata in medieval society, Elias argued that the high level of violence was not restricted to the ruling warriors: "The structure and tensions of this society made this an inescapable condition for individuals" (Elias 2000, p. 166). The main point is that in comparison to the level of violence of the Middle Ages, "the aggressiveness of even the most warlike nations of the civilized world appears subdued" (Elias 2000, p. 161). In sum, the "civilizing process" refers to a deep transformation of human relations. It is basically a process of pacification of human relations. Durkheim contrasted two forms of social solidarity (mechanical and organic) to explain modernity; Marx differentiated between two modes of production (feudal and capitalist) to do the same; Elias explained the modern "civilization" by contrasting two configurations in relation to violence: the medieval one where violence is predominant and the "civilized" one where social behaviours are relatively pacified within the states.

Elias offered a sociological explanation of this "civilizing process" connecting the "social structure" of society to the "structure of personality". More precisely, he proposed a "sociogenesis of the concept of civilization" where he showed that this concept was used for the first time at the court society in France (Elias 2000, p. 31), "at a time when knightly society and the unity of the Catholic Church were disintegrating" (Elias 2000, p. 47). In short, the concept of *civilité* and various "civilized" manners were developed by French nobles at the court society of the sixteenth century as a mode of cultural distinction.

As time passed by, the idea of being "civilized" became nationalized in France because the class barriers were not as strong as they could be elsewhere, such as in Germany. The new codes of behaviour of the French nobles—"etiquette" for table manners, for example—could be diffused to, appropriated and adapted by other classes thanks to face-to-face interactions at the court, the publication of books, and later through education in families and at school. In France, this process became a national one—France was in a full "civilizing process"—in the eighteenth century when the bourgeoisie had appropriated the habitus of the nobility (Elias 2000, p. 31).

Basically, being "civilized" means having the capacity to control drives and feelings in order to respect the new codes of behaviour of the "good society". For example, "civilized" people do not wipe their nose on their hands at the table; they wash their hands before eating; they do not touch themselves under their clothes with their bare hands; and they do not get involved in duels, torture other people in public, or practise and enjoy raping, pillaging and killing. "Civilized" people learn to control themselves in order to behave as "civilized" people (self-control); at the same time, "civilized" society is composed of interdependent people checking on each other ("social control" or "external control").

According to Elias, this "civilizing process" became possible only because another large social process happened: the formation of the absolutist monarchy. This process evolved through power relations among four groups: the declining nobility and the Church, the princes and the rising bourgeoisie (Elias 2000, p. 187). And it happened through the following sub-processes:

- The monarchies implemented and controlled taxation over one territory, which gave them greater economic resources than the declining nobility and the Church (Elias 2000, pp. 191–92).
- These economic resources could be used by monarchs to build stronger armies by hiring warriors, developing military techniques and buying more weapons. In this competition, the old class of warriors of the medieval societies, for instance, did not have the resources to beat them. In many cases, previously autonomous warriors were hired into the armies of the kings and queens (Elias 2000, pp. 192–93).
- The monarchs could maintain enough tension between the nobles and the rising bourgeoisie in order to prevent any alliance against them.

> Otherwise, "(w)here the balance was lost, where one group or stratum became too strong, or where aristocratic and upper bourgeois groups even temporarily allied, the supremacy of the central power was seriously threatened or—as in England—doomed" (Elias 2000, p. 194).

Thanks to the consolidation of European monarchies and to larger international processes of diffusion, imitation and appropriation happening through relationships between the newly formed European courts, this concept of "civilization" and the specific habitus of the "civilized" were diffused outside France, from the French court to other new or emerging courts (Elias 2000, p. 189).

One has to keep in mind that these processes of centralization and monopolization of taxation, weapons and armies, the diffusion of the new French "civilized" habitus, and all the political games made by divisions and alliances at the courts, happened through a long series of bloody conflicts. Paradoxically, the "civilizing" process implied a lot of blood, destruction and suffering. Many rivals fought with everything they had to increase the territory they were trying to control, or simply to try to preserve the one they already had. Elias coldly called this violent European process "the mechanism of monopoly formation" (at least this is how it was translated in 2000); and he scientifically defined it in a very "civilized" way, as some sort of a game or a "competition":

> If, in a major social unit, a large number of the smaller social units which, through their interdependence, constitute the larger one, are of roughly equal social power and are thus able to compete freely—unhampered by pre-existing monopolies—for the means to social power, i.e. primarily the means of subsistence and production, the probability is high that some will be victorious and others vanquished, and that gradually, as a result, fewer and fewer will control more and more opportunities, and more and more units will be eliminated from the competition, becoming directly dependent on an ever-decreasing number. The human figuration caught up in this movement will therefore, unless countervailing measures are taken, approach a state in which all opportunities are controlled by a single authority: a system with open opportunities will become a system with closed opportunities. (Elias 2000, p. 269)

At the state level, as we have seen, this "competition" produced kingdoms where monarchs monopolized taxation and the use of violence. Modern states were born and governments, polices and armies could control

and pacify their respective territory. The use of private violence became forbidden and restricted to legitimate specialists (policemen, professional soldiers) who used it in secluded spaces (like prisons) in specific, regulated contexts. The glory days of the chaotic and dangerous warrior society were over. Being monopolized by the state, "legitimate" violence was usually hidden and rationalized. It was no longer glorified. Many explanations of Weber and Foucault on power and the modern state can be associated with the analysis of Elias.

Getting also closer to Durkheim, Elias added that the emergence of stable "civilized" states was related to another large social process: the increased number of people and the "differentiation of social functions" (Elias 2000, p. 207). In few words, the control of larger territories became possible, or manageable, when more people interacted with each other in greater areas (by using money for example); when the means of transportation and communication were efficient enough; and when the interdependency of regions was more important (Elias 2000, p. 206). At the same time, the growing interdependency of people favoured the new "personality structure" based on self-restraints (Elias 2000, p. 253). It became riskier or too costly to have too many enemies when people were more interdependent due to a complex division of labour; and the interests and feelings towards the others became more ambivalent than simply negative (Elias 2000, p. 318).

In this new configuration, the need for the state "as supreme coordinator and regulator for the functionally differentiated figuration at large" (Elias 2000, p. 314) became stronger. Of course, this process of increasing interdependency also favoured people's integration and common (national) identities in comparison to the medieval time where "(t)he separate identity of each region, the special interests and character of each territory, were still very strongly felt" (Elias 2000, p. 287). Elias also presented the rise in standard of living and security as the "precondition" for the individuals to be "civilized" since the rationalization of behaviour becomes impossible when one is driven by fear (Elias 2000, p. 441).

As noticed before, Elias established some sort of dialectical thinking between the "social structure" of the "civilized" society and the psyche of "civilized" individuals. On one hand, individuals have to restrain their drives and feelings (such as their fears of the others) to live in a "civilized" society; but on the other hand, the society has to be "pacified" to allow the individuals to restrain their drives and feelings. Self-control and social control reinforce each other; they are two necessary dimensions of the "civilizing"

process. At the end, this new way of being in "society"—based on social control and self-restraint of drives and feelings, respect for new codes of behaviour, the formidable economic and military resources which could be mobilized by the new "pacified" European states, and the increasing differentiation of functions—eventually expressed "the self-consciousness of the West" and its related strong feeling of superiority towards the "barbarians", the "primitives" or the "uncivilized" one could find in other parts of the world (Elias 2000, p. 5).

All of those explanations seem to be relevant to understand what happened in France and maybe in other parts of Europe. However, there is a paradox Elias did not integrate enough into his theory: these social processes explained by him also fuelled very violent processes like colonization and genocides. This is not so surprising since the feeling of superiority of the West was coupled with the capacity of states like Belgium, France, Great Britain, Portugal and Spain to build powerful and destructive technologies and armies the so-called "barbarians" could not match nor resist. The neglect of this ambivalence towards violence represents a major problem since modernity is highly paradoxical in its relation to violence (Burkitt 1996). This "civilizing process" has been a process of pacification in some spaces and contexts; and it has been, at the same time, very violent in other spaces and contexts. This is one of the main reasons why we have to work on the theory of Elias. In other words, I am not suggesting we abandon it since it helps us to understand the social origins of the relative pacification of our civilization. I am suggesting working on this theory—to improve it—in order to integrate the social dynamics which have fuelled violence in the same civilization.

3 The Dark Side of Modernity

We are in 1950, a long time after the "civilizing process" started. This is how H. Arendt introduced her readers to her famous book *The Origins of Totalitarianism*:

> TWO WORLD WARS in one generation, separated by an uninterrupted chain of local wars and revolutions, followed by no peace treaty for the vanquished and no respite for the victor, have ended in the anticipation of a third World War between the two remaining world powers. This moment of anticipation is like the calm that settles after all hopes have died. We no longer hope for an eventual restoration of the old world order with all its traditions, or for the

> reintegration of the masses of continents who have been thrown into a chaos produced by the violence of wars and revolutions and the growing decay of all that has still been spared. Under the most diverse conditions and disparate circumstances, we watch the development of the same phenomena—homelessness on an unprecedented scale, rootlessness to an unprecedented depth.
>
> Never has our future been more unpredictable, never have we depended so much on political forces that cannot be trusted to follow the rules of common sense and self-interest—forces that look like sheer insanity, if judged by the standards of other centuries. It is as though mankind had divided itself between those who believe in human omnipotence (who think that everything is possible if one knows how to organize masses for it) and those for whom powerlessness has become the major experience of their lives. On the level of historical insight and political thought there prevails an ill-defined, general agreement that the essential structure of all civilizations is at the breaking point. Although it may seem better preserved in some parts of the world than in others, it can nowhere provide the guidance to the possibilities of the century, or an adequate response to its horrors. Desperate hope and desperate fear often seem closer to the center of such events than balanced judgment and measured insight. The central events of our time are not less effectively forgotten by those committed to a belief in an unavoidable doom, than by those who have given themselves up to reckless optimism.[2]

Three years before, Horkheimer and Adorno had introduced their readers to another classic book in social sciences and philosophy: *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Like Arendt, they foresaw the collapse of our civilization. For them, fascism and barbarism were not abnormal moments of madness; they were the effects of the "bourgeois civilization":

> What we had set out to do was nothing less than to explain why humanity, instead of entering a truly human state, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism.
>
> (…) in the present collapse of bourgeois civilization not only the operations but the purpose of science have become dubious. The tireless self-destruction of enlightenment hypocritically celebrated by implacable fascists and implemented by pliable experts in humanity compels thought to forbid itself its last remaining innocence regarding the habits and tendencies of the Zeitgeist.[3]

Those intellectuals had good reasons to believe that modern civilization was collapsing. For centuries, the most "civilized" European nations invaded the planet through "colonization" and "imperialism". Those

processes were based on destruction, rape, pillage, torture and massacre. Probably more than 10 million people in Africa—men, women and children—were captured, enslaved and shipped to European colonies in a global quest for power, prestige and profit. Millions of these people died in horrible conditions during their transportation or in slavery plantations, mines and other horrific places for human beings. Aboriginal populations were decimated by "civilized" people in Australia and the Americas, often with no regret and unbelievable cruelty. In brief, the "civilized" people were terribly violent, as the French politician G. Clémenceau replied to the pro-colonization speech made by J. Ferry in the highly "civilized" Assemblée Nationale in Paris in July 1885:

> Look at the history of the conquest of these people you call barbarians and you will see violence, all these unchained crimes, the oppression, the blood bleeding profusely, the weak oppressed, tyrannized by the winner! This is the history of our civilization! […] How many horrible, frightening crimes have been committed in the name of justice and civilization. I say nothing about the vices Europeans bring with them: alcohol, opium they spread, they impose as they wish.[4]

"The horror! The horror!": these were the last words the colonial administrator Kurtz pronounced when he died in J. Conrad's novel *Heart of the Darkness*. This is all he could remember about his "civilizing" activities in the African colony of Congo. Horror is still part of our "civilization". From the first murder, torture or rape which came with the European colonization to the last terrorist action on the streets of Paris or London, we still live with the dark side of modernity. Besides the process of relative pacification explained by Elias, it has been a long chain of multiple interactions where blood brings blood. It has also been what Elias called a "double-bind" process: "violence engenders counter-violence, counter-violence heightens the violence on the other side, and so on" (Elias 1996, p. 200).

4 But Maybe We Are Less Violent, Relatively Speaking?

Obviously, the history of modernity has produced a mixture of dust, blood and suffering. But relatively speaking, how do we look? Are we more or less violent in comparison to the middle age and other pre-modern worlds? Maybe we are becoming more "civilized" in spite of spectacular

moments of regression into "barbarity"? This kind of question was raised by N. Elias. These are good questions but not necessarily the best or the only ones to ask. Let's see why.

The Civilizing Process was published in 1939. It was in the midst of a huge social mess. Nevertheless, as we saw, Elias's central thesis was that our civilization is based on less violence than in pre-modern time. In spite of what he will call later the Nazi "breakdown of civilization", Elias focused on "a fact which is astonishing and unique": "the relatively high degree of non-violence that is characteristic of the social organizations of today" (1996, p. 174).

Unsurprisingly, *The Civilizing Process* did not find many sympathetic readers in messy Europe. The book quickly went out of print; Elias had to escape Germany and he received no public recognition of any kind. Time passed, emotions cooled off, new generations appeared with their hopes and problems, and Elias's book finally found its audience thanks to its first English translation in 1969. Relatively speaking, it became a famous book in social sciences. But it has been contested for the same reasons it was ignored before. The idea that there is an ongoing "civilizing process" mainly characterized by less violence is still hard to sell due to the clear prevalence of brutality in this world. As Wieviorka wrote in a recent book on violence:

> But both the history of the twentieth century—the history of wars, genocides and other mass murders—and the social changes which have for example, seen an almost systematic rise in the statistics for delinquency in Western societies since the end of the Second World War, suggest that we must be wary of images of a general decline in violence in the contemporary world. (2009, p. 1)

In the same spirit, C. Lash wrote in 1985 (p. 708):

> Elias takes for granted what many of us have come to doubt, that history records the triumph of order over anarchy. There is no irony or ambiguity in his account of the civilizing process. Even today, he retains an optimism increasingly alien to our age. "I don't share the pessimism which is today à la mode", he said in an interview in 1974. Alas, pessimism is no passing fad; more and more, it looks like the only tenable attitude in the face of our century's horrors.

As we will see below, other competent social scientists have defended Elias by trying to prove that his thesis is valid. The main point I want to underline for now is that if we stay in this intellectual box, the central research problem is the following:

> We should try to corroborate or refute Elias's theory by finding out if, on the "longue durée", the level of violence has decreased, stayed the same or increased with the so-called (European) "civilizing process". If the level of violence has decreased, the theory of Elias is corroborated. If the level of violence has stayed the same or increased, the theory of Elias is refuted.

In this logic, finding reliable indicators of the levels of violence to compare "uncivilized" and "civilized" societies is a key issue, as one can see by reading some texts in the literature on Elias's theory.[5]

5 Another Option: Working on the Theory

This last research problem is certainly important from a large, comparative socio-historical perspective; finding the right answer would certainly improve our understanding of our social universe. However, and once more, it is not necessarily the best kind of question to ask if we want to evaluate the full relevance of Elias's theory, and if we want to fully understand our "civilization". Indeed, imagine if we could find perfectly reliable indicators to compare the levels of violence before and since modernity. If we found out that violence has decreased in "civilized" societies, we would corroborate Elias's theory by forgetting that, somehow, it does neglect the centrality of violence in this world.

The other option is really no better when we try to corroborate or refute the theory of Elias. If we discover that violence has stayed at the same level or has increased since modernity, we simply refute the theory and, by doing so, we lose the interesting part of Elias's theory. In spite of the neglect of the centrality of violence, somehow Elias showed that our relationship to violence has changed within this "civilizing process".

We can avoid these two poor outcomes by changing the research problem. We do not have to test this theory. We can choose to work on it by keeping the good parts and fixing some weaknesses. In order to achieve this, we have to see this theory—like any other good sociological theory—for what it is: an interesting but imperfect explanation of contextualized social processes and, therefore, a theory in need of significant changes.

6 The Neglect of Violence

The Civilizing Process proposes a useful but limited theory of modern societies. What makes many of us feel uncomfortable when we read *The Civilizing Process* is the impression that somehow, violence is not seen as one central feature of our "civilization". Of course, Elias recognized the presence of violence throughout the long-term "civilizing process". For instance, he knew violence was still predominant at the "uncivilized" international level where there is no monopoly of legitimate violence; and even, sometimes, within the "civilized" states where balances of power favouring one group of rulers can produce dictatorial political regimes. He also believed in the existence of "decivilizing processes" as temporary moments, and even in the possible collapse of the whole "civilizing process". In this respect, Dunning and Mennell correctly noted that Elias was aware of the "ambivalence" of modernity about violence (1996, pp. 354–55). Indeed, in *The Germans* Elias talked about the "dark side of modernity"—something which was probably not underlined clearly enough in the 1930s when he wrote *The Civilizing Process.* And like Arendt, Bauman, Horkheimer, Adorno and many others, he also saw the Holocaust as an illustration of some negative aspects of Western civilization: "The Eichmann trial has momentarily lifted the veil which hides the darker side of civilized human beings" (Elias 1996, p. 304). Nevertheless, in spite of all of this, his explanations often gave the impression that he neglected the importance of this darker side. One can defend Elias by multiplying the citations where he referred to this aspect of our messy history, but in *The Civilizing Process* he mostly related the "civilizing process" to opposite dynamics where, overall, violence is relatively controlled and self-restrained, hidden in special institutions thanks to phenomena like an anti-violence habitus and the modern state. It is as if this "civilizing process" could be understood by seeing highly and collective violent processes as exceptional moments of failure, as abnormal phenomena, or as the signs that the "civilizing process" is still not completed. Instead, we should see that violence is a crucial dimension of our civilization.[6] It is in this way that Elias's explanations are incomplete or unsatisfactory in spite of their strengths.

There are many reasons for this neglect of the centrality of violence in our civilization. Firstly, Elias reduced the social space of the modern "civilizing process" to specific and stabilized European spaces. Among others, J. Goody (2002) noted we cannot produce a general theory of civilizing processes

with such a limited focus. But even if this theory is the explanation of one (modern and European) civilizing process, its focus is problematic. Indeed, it is because of this focus that Elias was blind to the central role played by intensive violence in other social fields within this civilization. For instance, he only briefly mentioned what was going on in European colonies, where violent behaviors were predominant among "civilized" people (Dépelteau et al. 2013). This is not enough since colonization and slavery made France and Great Britain "civilized" nations. France and Great Britain were not "civilized" in spite of the horrors going on in their colonies. In M. Mann's terms, we can say that these colonies were part of this "civilization" politically, economically, ideologically and military speaking. This is one example of the two faces of modernity: it can be argued that the relative pacification of some states was achieved to the detriment and destruction of other people.

Secondly, it is wrong to defend this focus by invoking the fact that the notion of *civilité* was created by the French nobles in France. The concept of "civilization"—and therefore of the "civilizing process"—has to refer to the larger processes of interactions which made this global "civilization".

Thirdly, this problem also comes from the influence of T. Hobbes on Elias's worldviews. Consciously or not, Elias associated the medieval era with the "state of nature" of Hobbes, and European states like France and Great Britain with societies pacified by the Leviathan. The relation between Hobbes and Elias is more complex than this simple association, but the main point here is that with such an intellectual orientation, nation states like France and Great Britain can be seen as being simply or mostly "pacified" in Paris, London and other selected locations, whereas, in fact, their existence relies on ongoing and terrible violence in larger configurations, including their colonies—a violence which was known and accepted by many of the not-so-simply "civilized" people of these countries. As someone who advocated the study of large processes and configurations, Elias should had been more inclusive in his study of this "civilization", rather than relying on this Hobbesian-oriented focus on restricted European territories. In doing so, his views on the habitus and the states of this "civilizing" process would have been obviously different.

Finally, part of the problem also arises from the main and *exclusive* question Elias had in mind when he studied our "civilization":

> In striving to examine the problem of physical violence in the social life of human beings, people often ask the wrong sort of questions. It is usual to ask how is it possible that people within a society can physically strike or kill

> others—how, for example, can they become terrorists? It would better fit the facts and thus be more fruitful if the question were differently phrased. It should rather read, how is it possible that so many people can normally live together peacefully, without fear of being attacked or killed by people stronger than themselves, as is nowadays largely the case in the great state-societies of Europe, America, China or Russia? (Elias 1996, p. 174)

This is a good question to ask and this intellectual move is a clever one. In some ways, this reformulation of the research problem allowed him to see social phenomena leading to pacification that others could hardly imagine. Unfortunately, by acting as if one has to choose between these two questions, and by favouring the second one to the detriment of the first, Elias was forced to neglect the analysis of processes favouring high levels of violence in modernity.

Once again, social processes with high levels of violence, such as genocides and wars, are not temporary "decivilization spurts" even if we can describe them as such; and as I will argue below, beyond the number of victims of homicides, the importance of self-restraint in our daily life, our greater interdependency, and beyond the monopolization of legitimate violence by the state, social processes based on high levels of violence have been a crucial characteristic of modernity within the "civilized" states, between these states and in other parts of the world which have been incorporated—usually by physical force—in this social order. These kinds of bloody processes are what we call the dark side of modernity. And this is what Bauman (1989) and Burkitt (1996) had in mind when they criticized Elias. Indeed, Bauman correctly argued that the Holocaust cannot be simply seen as a "decivilizing spurt" in the history of modernity, or just as a German exception due to internal phenomena such as decisions made by the Nazi rulers, their specific beliefs on races, the military ethos of the German nobility, the violent culture of the German middle class or the frustrations caused by the defeat during the First World War, as Elias argued in *The Germans*. These internal phenomena were certainly important and Elias's explanations are interesting, but the Holocaust was also *part of* modernity, as Arendt, Bauman and so many others have explained. The Holocaust was a possible outcome of sub-processes such as colonization, its related racism and its culture of violence. In this sense, maybe because he sticks too much to the theory of Elias, Mennell missed the point when he wrote that "(t)he Holocaust refuted the theory of the European civilizing process in much the same way that the Black Death

cast doubt on the long-term tendency for the continent's population to grow" (1990, p. 217). Maybe the "civilizing process" as seen by Elias continued after the Holocaust, and Elias was right about the relative pacification of some social fields in Western civilization. But again, highly violent social processes have also been part of modernity. These dark events did not only temporarily stop the "civilizing process". They were also part of its making. As Burkitt put it, the so-called "civilizing process" "must be seen as a thoroughly ambivalent legacy in the face of our century's horrors"; and "these ambivalent features are as much potential forces of destruction as they are of internal pacification and 'civilization'" (1996, p. 135). In this respect, we have to improve Elias's explanations by integrating the dark side of modernity in a different way from how it is typically done by Elias and his defenders.

In the next part of the chapter, I will explain further why we should move beyond the two usual strategies used to defend Elias's theory: (i) counting and comparing the number of victims in pre-modern and modern societies, and (ii) seeing significant violent process within the "civilizing process" as "breakdowns of civilization" or "decivilizing spurts". Once again, this kind of work has certainly some merit, but I think we can do much more with Elias's views on violence in *The Civilizing Process* and *The Germans*.

7 Counting the Victims and the "Decivilizing Spurts"

As mentioned before, one way of defending Elias's theory is to count the victims of violence at different periods of time and to compare. For example, one can produce statistics and tables showing a decrease of homicides from pre-modern time to modern time. This is what S. Pinker did in the best seller *The Better Angels of Our Nature*. Like others defending Elias's theory, he relied partly on the statistics produced by T. Gurr in 1981. The result is impressive and it does question the pessimism of all the intellectuals mentioned above, at least those who criticized Elias—"the most important thinker you have never heard of", according to Pinker. For example, one graph shows:

> (…) that from the 13th century to the 20th, homicide in various parts of England plummeted by a factor of ten, fifty, and in some cases a hundred—for example, from 110 homicides per 100,000 people per year in 14th-century

> Oxford to less than 1 homicide per 100,000 in mid-20th-century London. The graph stunned almost everyone who saw it (including me—as I mentioned in the preface, it was the seed that grew into this book). (Pinker 2011)

Here we are invited to look at the *longue durée*, as Elias did. One should also keep in mind that Elias stressed "that there are many counter-spurts within the process", as Mennell said (1990, p. 210). In this sense, events like the Holocaust become temporary moments within a longer "civilizing process". Pinker went as far as to suggest that Nazi Germany continued the "civilizing process" in some ways: "In fact in Germany during the Nazi years the declining trend for one-on-one homicides continued".[7] Mennell noticed the horrors and the suffering of all the victims, but he also saw signs or effects of the "civilizing process" within the Holocaust when he noted how many Germans were "revulsed" "when the full scale of the killings became known" (1990, p. 216). In other words, violence was still condemned by many Germans during the Holocaust; they were still, somehow, "civilized". I agree this is an important point showing the relative relevance of Elias's theory, and that no individual is ever completely "uncivilized". However, if this is an argument for saving the theory of Elias from refutation in the face of the Holocaust, it is a poor one. Signs of "revulsions" among (some) Germans after the genocide became "known" does not fix the problem raised by the Holocaust to Elias's theory. Adding that "civilizing tendencies regained dominance after a relatively few years", and "that whether and how they would have done so without external military intervention we can only speculate" (Mennell 1990, p. 217) is even weaker. We can easily guess that if the Nazis had won this war, the Holocaust would probably not have caused so much "revulsion" in Germany (and even maybe elsewhere in Europe). We can even imagine it would have been seen as some sort of heroic accomplishment. Besides, even during the genocide, the "revulsion" of Germans who knew what was going on, and there were many of them who knew, was not important enough to prevent the massacre from happening or even to fuel any important, large-scale German resistance. There was little "civilizing" effect there. There was probably just enough effect to incite the rulers to hide the killings to some extent, but it did not prevent it from happening even if the Germans were not full, wild "barbarians". One could argue that the fear of repression explains this lack of resistance, or that the Germans were not as "civilized" as the French or the British people. But one could also argue, as I shall do below, that the "civilized" Europeans were used to large-scale massacres. Such violent processes were part of their "civilization".

The fact is that the Holocaust still has to be explained in relation to the theory. Elias tried in *The Germans* and I shall return to these explanations later. For now, let's come back to Pinker in order to clearly show the limits of counting the number of victims in order to corroborate or refute the theory. Pinker knew about the problems of finding reliable indicators, such as rates of homicide, to determine the level of violence over a long period of time and in different contexts. He was also aware that modern large-scale violent processes like the Holocaust or two world wars represent significant problems for Elias's theory. Nevertheless, he devoted a full chapter to counting the number of victims of large-scale violent social processes such as genocides, wars, purges and man-made famines. According to him, his statistical data show the same tendency: "a backdrop of violence that was endured, and often embraced, in ways that startle the sensibilities of a 21st-century Westerner".[8] For example, it seems that the percentage of death in warfare has significantly decreased in the history of human beings. Note that we are talking in terms of percentage of death in warfare and not in terms of absolute numbers. Otherwise, the outlook is very different: "In absolute numbers, of course, civilized societies are matchless in the destruction they have wreaked".[9] The reasoning of Pinker is that "in comparing the harmfulness of violence across societies, we should focus on the rate, rather than the number, of violent acts".[10] There are certainly good reasons for making this choice. The fact remains that our civilization has been characterized by significant violent events where millions of people were killed by other people. Adding that people stood more chance of being killed in violent ways in pre-modern time does not explain or reduce the importance of violent social processes as key characteristics of modernity.

Once again, all these moments of formidable violence from the colonization to world wars and the Holocaust, and many other similar events, still have to be explained in relation to the so-called "civilizing process" theory—especially because they shaped our social universe in deep, significant ways. Marginalizing these social processes is not a serious option.

So, the next question is: Can we explain events like the Holocaust within Elias's theory? This brings us to another strategy used to defend the theory. It consists of emphasizing that Elias mentioned the existence, and the constant possibility, of "decivilizing processes", especially in his book *The Germans*. This thesis has been clearly presented by Mennell (1990), Dunning and Mennell (1998) and in another interesting text, *Violence & Civilization* by J. Fletcher. In short, "breakdowns of civilization" can

be explained through a reversal of the social processes which made the "civilizing process". In this logic, Fletcher mentioned three main criteria of "decivilization" and many other related processes:

> (…) one would be a shift in the balance between constraints by others and self-restraint in favour of constraints by others; another would be the development of a social standard of behaviour and feeling which generates the emergence of a less even, all-round, stable and differentiated pattern of self-restraint; and, third, we would expect a contraction in the scope of mutual identification between constituent groups and individuals. These three main features would be likely to occur in societies in which there was a decrease in the (state) control of the monopoly of violence, a fragmentation of social ties and a shortening of chains of commercial, emotional and cognitive interdependence. It is also likely that such societies would be characterized by: a rise in the level of fear, insecurity, danger and incalculability; the re-emergence of violence into the public sphere; growing inequality or heightening of tensions in the balance of power between constituent groups; a decrease in the distance between the standards of adults and children; a freer expression of aggressiveness and an increase in cruelty; an increase in impulsiveness; an increase in involved forms of thinking with their concomitantly high fantasy content and a decrease in detached forms of thought with an accompanying decrease in the "reality-congruence" of concepts. (Fletcher 1997, pp. 83–4)

In brief, violent processes like the Holocaust would be moments of some sort of regression towards the barbarity of the Middle Ages: "decivilizing processes are what happens when civilizing processes go into reverse" (Mennell 1990, p. 205).

The thesis of "decivilizing process" raises problems of its own. Even a sympathetic reader like Pinker recognizes the limits of Elias's theory in this respect:

> Elias himself was haunted by the not-so-civilized behavior of his native Germany during World War II, and he labored to explain that "decivilizing process" within the framework of his theory.
>
> (…)
>
> It would be a stretch to say that he rescued his theory with these analyses, but perhaps he shouldn't have tried. The horrors of the Nazi era did not consist in an upsurge in feuding among warlords or of citizens stabbing each other over the dinner table, but in violence whose scale, nature, and causes are altogether different.[11]

In fact, this surreal violence was modern, European and "civilized". For instance, Bauman insisted on the bureaucratic nature of the Holocaust which involved thousands of highly "civilized" public servants, engineers and scientists. The Holocaust was an enterprise of social engineering, morally neutralized by the logic of bureaucracy. The victims were not murdered by a wild group of "barbarians" in some Hobbesian state of nature. It was not a "decivilizing spurt" or a "breakdown". And it did not simply come from specific German social processes and the beliefs of Nazi rulers, even if these phenomena were obviously present in this organized massacre. The Holocaust was German and modern. This idea is difficult to accept. We certainly prefer to detach the Holocaust from our civilization for various reasons, such as moral ones and the fear that it could happen again, here, at home. There is even a worst fear at play: Maybe I could also kill innocent people, like these "civilized" Germans did … The challenge is to be more detached and accept the idea that, maybe, our "civilization" is also a violent one even if violence is not typically glorified, and if it usually no longer happens centre stage. The fact that public scenes of torture, like the one described by Foucault at the beginning of *Discipline and Punish*, are very unlikely in our "civilized" states does not mean that violence is still not a central feature of this social order.

Scientifically speaking, as Bauman said, too many specialists persist in "conceiv[ing] of the Holocaust as a unique yet fully determined product of a particular concatenation of social and psychological factors, which led to a temporary suspension of the civilizational grip in which human behaviour is normally held".[12] By thinking in this way, we take the risk of ending up with a more or less classical sociological theory where violent events which do not fit with the theory are considered as "abnormal" processes of failed socialization. We can do much better with Elias's theory if we are willing to detach ourselves from his texts, if we try to move beyond his theory without abandoning it. In this logic, the dark side of modernity raises some legitimate questions, such as: In relation to large-scale and impressively violent processes such as Western slavery, the colonial "adventures" of countries like France, the Holocaust in Germany, and so many other similar processes in modernity, what are the benefits of Elias's theory of the "civilizing process"? Is there any merit to this theory? If there is something important to preserve from this theory, what is it? Once again, I think Elias provided relevant explanations for the understanding of the

relative pacification of our social life in some social fields. But he also provided incomplete and unsatisfactory views since he could not see that this civilization has also fuelled violence in many ways.

8 Some Violent and "Civilized" Sub-Processes

On 17 June 1845, at a time where most—if not all—French people were already "civilized",

> (…) Colonel Jean Jacques Pélissier directed one of the most notorious atrocities of the early Algerian colony. As part of General Thomas Bugeaud's push to pacify the Kabyle, Pélissier had been assigned the task of subduing the Ouled Riah, but at Dahra he faced a dilemma for the tribe had ensconced themselves in a complex of caves. Such tactics were familiar to Pélissier, for the Kabyles stood little chance of fighting off the French on open ground. Consequently, just as they had done under Ottoman rule, the Ouled Riah had turned to the caves as a last redoubt. The tribe had, however, made a fatal error in their belief that the caves constituted a place of safety, for after a short period of spasmodic fighting and failed negotiations, Pélissier's men threw burning bundles of twigs into the cavern. Twelve hours later, once the flames and smoke had dispersed, Pélissier ordered his men to carefully enter the caves to ascertain whether the Ouled Riah were subdued and in a position to make a pact with the French Army. Six hundred bodies were dragged from the caves, of which fifty to a hundred showed signs of life. (Gallois 2013, p. 3)

This massacre was not an exceptional event simply due to the cruelty of one officer; and, of course, military invasions are violent by nature. But there was something more to this story. Somehow, this massacre was linked to larger policies in the Algerian colony, as reported by the Algerian Hamdan Khodja in his book *Le Miroir*. Khodja was a notable under the Ottoman Empire and he worked with the French. For moral reasons, he "quickly became disillusioned with the character of Algier's new foreign rulers" (Gallois 2013, p. 5):

> Khodja stood as a witness to the exterminatory policies of the French in their appropriation of the idea of the razzia: to "the theatre of horrors" that they had staged in Algiers, to the "shameful massacres" of men, women, and children by Count Bertrand Clauzel's forces at Blida, where breast-feeding children had been sliced apart, and to the more general "yoke

> of extermination and war crimes." Yet Khodja was able to see beyond such atrocities to observe that the true danger for Algerians lay in the fact that such discrete acts together constituted the formation of a broader policy environment in which "extermination" came to be seen as a natural feature of liberal empire. In fact, Khodja noted, there were but two "solutions" to France's Algerian problem: "to fight to the point of either exterminating, subjugating or exiling Algerians, or the abandonment of the colony". (Gallois 2013, p. 6)

Not all French officers and soldiers saw themselves as involved in a process of extermination, and this strategy would have been highly contested in France if it had been announced as the official policy. In this sense, one can see some "civilized" habitus at work in this process. However, massive killing was in the mind of French politicians and it was discussed very seriously (even by distinguished thinkers such as Tocqueville as we shall see later in this chapter). For example,

> In 1838 the deputy Amédée Desjobert had called for honesty in admitting that France wanted to exterminate Algerians, observing that this was a predictable outcome in colonial situations, and, indeed, that it needed to be acknowledged that an exterminatory "système" had already been established in Algeria. Although the Commission on Africa of that same year rejected extermination as a policy option (primarily on the grounds of cost rather than morality), we are only beginning to understand the annihilatory consequences of French policies in Algeria. (Gallois 2013, p. 7)

It is interesting to see how the distinction between the "civilized" and the "barbaric" people is suddenly not so clear when we look at specific processes like these. Many "civilized" French people committed and justified massacres, while the "uncivilized" Algerians were the victims or the *disgusted* witnesses of massive and highly visible violence—visible to those who wanted to see it, of course. This brings us to the question: How do these social processes fit with Elias's theory of the "civilizing process" and his views on violence in our "civilization"?

Not so well at first sight and, clearly, the theory of "decivilizing processes" cannot be an adequate solution to this problem. It might describe some "mechanisms" at work during these violent processes even if it still has to be supported by empirical research. But it does not explain why these violent processes happened in the middle of a "civilizing process". In this respect, it should be noted that the explanations of Fletcher presented above look more like descriptions than explanations of "barbarian" acts.

Fear of the enemy, for instance, is more a dimension of a massacre than a cause of it. At least, it is a common dimension of war-like processes as much as a causal factor. In our example, the French soldiers were obviously not driven by their fear of powerless people hiding themselves in caves. Something else was at work, like probably the feeling of doing what had to be done in order to "civilize" Algeria. And even worse from a sociological point of view, the notion of "civilizing breakdown" can be seen as an ad hoc hypothesis which makes the theory of Elias irrefutable. Indeed, each time a critique uses an example showing some "barbaric" behaviours by "civilized" people, one disciple of Elias can always say the event was part of a temporary "decivilizing" process which does not refute the "fact" that, in "the last instance", the "civilizing process" will be still at work. Indeed, it was at work when these people were killed in these caves, and this is partly why the massacre happened.

This is why we need a modified approach showing the ambivalence of our "civilization" towards violence. The idea is to improve Elias's theory by completing it with the inclusion of sub-processes which have been neglected by Elias. The inclusion of these sub-processes helps us to integrate and understand the dark side of various modern "civilizing" processes. I do not say Elias completely ignored these sub-processes, but he somehow neglected them for the reasons I have explained. I can only give some brief explanations and examples of the kind of work which can be done in an attempt to improve the theory. And I will do so by briefly mentioning some of the sub-processes we can emphasize or add.

We can start by mentioning that our "civilization" has been characterized by capitalism, imperialism and the globalization of the economy. As Marx explained in *Capital*, capitalism has been made by sub-processes such as the privatization of land, the quest for profits through the transformation of raw materials and the exploitation of workers, and economic competition between capitalists. As Wallerstein explained, our "civilization" has also been characterized by imperialism and the globalization of the economy, that is, by sub-processes of incorporation of various parts of the world into the capitalist world economy:

> Incorporation means fundamentally that at least some significant production processes in a given geographic location become integral to various of the commodity chains that constitute the ongoing divisioning of labor of the capitalist world-economy. (2011, p. 130)

All of these sub-processes—the ones explained by Elias, capitalism, imperialism, the globalization of the economy, and many others—have been interconnected in various ways in the making of our "civilization", and these developments and connections happened in various ways. For example, capitalism and imperialism did not happen in the same way in Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium or Portugal. The same is true of the sub-processes identified by Elias: the diffusion of "civilized" manners and habitus from one class to another, the formation of We-identities, the greater interdependency between interactants, the monopolization of violence in the national territory, and so on.

In this social universe characterized by movement, fluidity and complexity, the careful observer can only analyze sub-processes one after another, compare them and try to come up with relevant explanations. In this way, sociologists come closer to history and become more prudent when they make generalizations. Even if we look for similarities, we should also remain sensitive to all the differences which make up our complex social universe. All this great effort being made through an endless back-and-forth movement between comparative works founded on theoretical compositions and re-compositions (where theories are proposed, compared, criticized, modified, abandoned, etc.), and socio-historical observations based on various methods.

For example, in relation to the theory of Elias, we can add the following sub-processes to his theory: by privatizing the land thanks to the adoption of the acts of enclosure and other measures, the Tudor regime in Great Britain extinguished the rights of the peasants over land usage. By doing so, they transformed these peasants into individuals who were forced to sell the only resource they had in order to survive: their labour power, as Marx explained.[13] Many of these desperate people became a surplus of unemployed, unproductive and potentially dangerous people in Great Britain. In this context, the colonization of territories like Australia, North America and Africa became a good solution for the new superfluous population.[14] Even if we are careful not to exaggerate the economic importance of colonization for European powers (Pétré-Grenouilleau 2004), this type of sub-process also provides access to new resources (sugar, tobacco, fish, wood, mining products, etc.) and sources of profit. As we can see, colonization and its high level of violence came from the development of this "civilization" more than its "breakdown". For example, the highly "civilized" J. Ferry justified the (violence of) the colonization of Algeria by using very rational and economic arguments: his "great" nation had to find a way to send abroad a surplus of capital in a context where protectionism was very strong in other "civilized" countries:

> In the area of economics, I am placing before you, with the support of some statistics, the considerations that justify the policy of colonial expansion, as seen from the perspective of a need, felt more and more urgently by the industrialized population of Europe and especially the people of our rich and hardworking country of France: the need for outlets [for exports]. Is this a fantasy? Is this a concern [that can wait] for the future? Or is this not a pressing need, one may say a crying need, of our industrial population? I merely express in a general way what each one of you can see for himself in the various parts of France. Yes, what our major industries [textiles, etc.], irrevocably steered by the treaties of 18601 into exports, lack more and more are outlets. Why? Because next door Germany is setting up trade barriers; because across the ocean the United States of America have become protectionists, and extreme protectionists at that; because not only are these great markets … shrinking, becoming more and more difficult of access, but these great states are beginning to pour into our own markets products not seen there before. This is true not only for our agriculture, which has been so sorely tried … and for which competition is no longer limited to the circle of large European states. … Today, as you know, competition, the law of supply and demand, freedom of trade, the effects of speculation, all radiate in a circle that reaches to the ends of the earth … That is a great complication, a great economic difficulty; … an extremely serious problem. It is so serious, gentlemen, so acute, that the least informed persons must already glimpse, foresee, and take precautions against the time when the great South American market that has, in a manner of speaking, belonged to us forever will be disputed and perhaps taken away from us by North American products. Nothing is more serious; there can be no graver social problem; and these matters are linked intimately to colonial policy. (http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1884ferry.asp)

In the eyes of many "civilized" people, (harsh) violence became a necessity. This is what Tocqueville also explained in his texts on the colony of Algeria.[15] We should keep in mind that the famous French intellectual was one member of the highly "civilized" society of his time. He came from an old aristocratic family; his father, the Comte de Tocqueville, was an officer of the Constitutional Guard of King XIV; Tocqueville was educated at the Lycée Fabert in Metz; he served as a deputy in the parliament who defended the abolitionist cause and the colonization of Algeria. No matter what the context was in Algeria and France at that time, the rational discourse of individuals like Tocqueville (and Ferry) cannot be confused with anything related to a "breakdown of civilization". On the contrary, as J. Pitts explained in her introduction to the collection of

texts of Tocqueville, his discourse on the Algerian colonization is a great illustration of how being "civilized" could lead to the calculated and cold justification of high violence:

> Tocqueville's writings on Algeria are an invaluable source of information about how French liberal thinkers treated the political, military, and moral aspects of a vast colonization project in its early days. Perhaps the most perceptive observer of politics and society of his day, he sought to grasp what was known as the "Algerian question" with as much attention as he had devoted to understanding American democracy. He was quick to appreciate the novelty of colonial warfare and administration, and he devoted careful and sometimes chillingly dispassionate study to questions about the means of colonization: how could France bring down the cost of its colonial military and make conquest quest more efficient? How much violence against the indigenous population was necessary in order to establish security for the colonists? Was intermarriage between settlers and native Algerians possible and desirable? The remarkable mixture of cruelty and sensibility we find in Tocqueville's writings on empire has led one scholar to remark that his colonial policy was "on the one hand quite unethical and on the other rather enlightened". (Pitts, J in de Tocqueville 2001, Kindle Edition: location 74)

This "remarkable mixture of cruelty and sensibility" in Tocqueville's texts is a great illustration of the ambiguity of our "civilization" towards violence. It shows that we should not simply reject Elias's explanations. These explanations help us to understand the socio-genesis of this "sensibility"—or the "detachment" of Tocqueville; his relative self-control in some of his explanations, such as when he rejected the idea of genocide for being too cruel. It also shows that simply defending Elias's theory is wrong. Indeed, we still have to explain this modern, "civilized" cruelty. This is the specific ambiguity of our "civilization" we have to explain rather than opposing "civilizing processes" to "decivilizing processes" as if these two sub-processes were not part of the same larger social dynamic. For example, Tocqueville calmly explained that France had to destroy any existing town in the resisting parts of Algeria if they wanted to keep the colony:

> No society, even if only half-civilized, can subsist without towns. Nomadic peoples do not escape from this necessity more than any others; indeed, they are even more subject to it than others, because the wandering life they lead prevents them from cultivating even coarsely the sciences and arts that are indispensable even to the least advanced civilization. Consequently, all the

> nomads of the world, unless they are purely savages, have always had, either in their own country or near it, towns where they went from time to time to sell and buy, towns with workshops, temples, books, schools, and idlers, and that formed sources of well-being and enlightenment from which, often unawares, they went to drink. The Arabs of the Regency thus could not do without towns; despite the passionate taste they show for the wandering life, they need some fixed settlements. It is of the greatest importance not to let a single one emerge among them, and all the expeditions whose aim is to occupy or to destroy the old towns and the nascent ones seem to me useful.[16]

Let me give another example of this fundamental ambiguity. Tocqueville answered the question "What type of war we can and must wage against the Arabs?" by rejecting the genocide option—"killing everything we meet"—for being "as unintelligent as it is cruel". Once again, he was rational and "civilized". But because he was rational and "civilized", he also advocated an extremely high level of violence. We need this colony for rational reasons, and we are at war, Tocqueville said. Therefore, because we are "civilized" we must kill and destroy as much as we have to, even if as a "civilized" people we would prefer to do otherwise:

> On the other hand, I have often heard men in France whom I respect, but with whom I do not agree, find it wrong that we burn harvests, that we empty silos, and finally that we seize unarmed men, women, and children. These, in my view, are unfortunate necessities, but ones to which any people that wants to wage war on the Arabs is obliged to submit. And, if I must speak my mind, these acts do not revolt me more than, or even as much as, many others that the law of war clearly authorizes and that have occurred in all the wars of Europe. How is it more odious to burn harvests and take women and children prisoner than to bombard the inoffensive population of a besieged village or to seize the merchant vessels belonging to the subjects of an enemy power? The one is, in my view, much more harsh and less justifiable than the other.[17]

In the same vein, Tocqueville talked about the strategic use of terror against civilians in order to prevent the rise of a strong Arabic leader in Algeria (Abd-el-Kader). He also mentioned that the French army had to respect the laws of our "civilization", but he was nevertheless advocating the use of terror against civilians:

> We shall never destroy Abd-el-Kader's power unless we make the position of the tribes who support him so intolerable that they abandon him. This is an obvious truth. We must conform to it or give up the game. For myself, I think that all means of desolating these tribes must be employed. I make an exception only of those condemned by humanity and by the law of nations.[18]

This is partly why and how you end up with "civilized" violence in this world. Of course, it can be argued that part of the violence in colonies came with processes which can be linked to Elias's explanations—processes such as the lack of shame and self-restraint of many officers and soldiers interacting through double-bind processes, the absence of centralized monopoly of violence in the colonies, the lack of interdependency between the "civilized" and the "barbarians", and the related absence of any significant "we" identity. We could also add other phenomena to this list, such as the use of "uncivilized" (non-Europeans) mercenaries or allies. The following events reported by the American Reverend Joseph Clark who witnessed the horror in Congo can be connected to this kind of Eliasian sub-process:

> April 12th, 1895, he writes:
>
> I am sorry that rubber palavers continue. Every week we hear of some fighting, and there are frequent "rows", even in our village, with the armed and unruly soldiers. … During the past twelve months it has cost more lives than native wars and superstition would have sacrificed in three to five years. The people make this comparison among themselves … It seems incredible and awful to think of these savage men armed with rifles and let loose to hunt and kill people, because they do not get rubber to sell at a mere nothing to the State, and it is blood-curdling to see them returning with hands of the slain and to find the hands of young children, amongst bigger ones, evidencing their "bravery". (Doyle, Arthur Conan et al. 2014, Kindle Locations 965–70)

Once again, Elias's explanations should not be too quickly discarded as if we have to choose between them and other explanations. But the point is that other modern, "civilized" processes were at work in the violent European colonies. In this dynamic and in the mind of the citizens of the "civilized" nation, violence was usually neither simply glorified nor out of control. It was often strategically planned and rationally justified. It was a tool used to fix problems, to maintain the high status of the "civilized"

nation and to improve the world by spreading this "civilization". It is in this kind of overdose of "civilization" that J. Ferry defended French colonization as a rational "system" founded on principles and rules. But he insisted that this "system" could not be based on irrationality (*démence*):

> The colonial policy, the policy of colonial expansion, is it, yes or no, a system? If we mean by this some sort of passion to expand and develop our colonial domain without any restraint, without neither principles nor rules, like without logic nor reason, motivated by some sort of desire for battles, adventures, easy glory, ah! Gentlemen, conceived in this manner, the colonial policy would not be a system: it would be a simple act of dementia.[19]
> (http://notresiecle.blogs.courrierinternational.com/archive/2009/12/01/jules-ferry-republicains-opportunistes-colonialisme-i.html)

Once again, for Ferry and many others, the colonization was a necessary strategy to fix problems of the "civilized" state, to preserve the high status and the power of the nation in a world characterized by competition with other nations, and it was also a "mission" deriving from the idea that by being civilized they were superior to the "barbarians".

This kind of logic prevailed when Henry Morton Stanley went to Congo for the Belgian King Leopold II. He was also rational, and full of good, noble and "civilized" intentions:

> On the return of Stanley from his great journey in 1878, he was met at Marseilles by a representative from the King of Belgium, who enrolled the famous traveller as an agent for his Association. The immediate task given to Stanley was to open up the Congo for trade, and to make such terms with the natives as would enable stations to be built and dépôts established. In 1879 Stanley was at work with characteristic energy. His own intentions were admirable. "We shall require but mere contact," he wrote, "to satisfy the natives that our intentions are pure and honorable, seeking their own good, materially and socially, more than our own interests. We go to spread what blessings arise from amiable and just intercourse with people who have been strangers to them." Stanley was a hard man, but he was no hypocrite. What he said he undoubtedly meant. (Doyle, Arthur Conan et al. 2014, Kindle Locations 152–58)

Like so many others, Stanley went to spread the bright, positive outcomes of "civilization". He did not go there to destroy, to cut off children's hands and kill innocent people. In spite of his intentions, Congo became

another sad example of the dark side of modernity. Again, it was not only the typical darkness of wars or invasions. It was about ugly, detestable subprocesses which came with and made this "civilization". In some ways, it is close to what Bauman said about the Holocaust, as a bureaucratic and rational genocide made to reinforce and "purify" Germany. In one way or another, in colonies many Europeans behaved like "barbarians" without going back to "barbary", as they did so because they were "civilized". Clearly, these notions have to be handled with great care since they cannot refer to a simple dualism as if being "civilized" means a clear, simple rejection of violence. Like Ferry, Tocqueville and so many other highly "civilized" people, many "civilized" people have felt they have to be violent, which is justified morally, rationally, politically, militarily and economically speaking. This acceptance of violence, in spite of the rejection of violence as explained by Elias, comes partly from a strange mixture made up by a quest for the perfect world (we saw this quest at work in the French Revolution and how it can lead to the use of state terrorism), and a sense of emergency that in this competitive, social Darwinist universe, if we do not beat them to it the others will destroy us. This type of fear has been part of the social order. It is not just a sign of its "breakdown". And this anxiety of being defeated has been mixed with positive feelings, such as being very proud of being French, British, Belgian, and so on and "civilized" and these quests for purity and perfection. Once more, we can listen to Jules Ferry. In this extract from the same pro-colonial speech made in 1885 in Paris, Ferry referred to a strong patriotic feeling—"*le sentiment de la grandeur de la France*", as he called it:

> (…) there are distant expeditions which are legitimate, and adventures we shall not fear of running, because the honor, the interests, the high reputation, the future of France are involved.[20]

When you mix a feeling of superiority coming from being "civilized" to the consciousness of being in competition with other nations, and therefore the fear of facing the degradation of your national status, we can end up with very "civilized" violent people who paradoxically despise violence generally speaking.

Indeed, the combination of the unintended effects of capitalism, its imperialistic and competitive dynamic and the feeling of superiority of the "civilized" became a lethal mixture for the victims of our modern "civilizations". Elias noted the potentiality of this process of distinction

in terms of high violence at the beginning of his book *The Civilizing Process*. Unfortunately, he did not really integrate this dimension of our civilization into his theory. If he had done so, it would have helped him to see how the most "civilized" people can justify violence to maintain their national status due to international competition; but also due to the idea that they had a "civilizing mission" to fulfil; that they are "cleaning" the world; that they are not responsible for the murders because they did not call for them; and so on. For instance, the religious mission of the Crusaders was replaced by a "civilizing" mission, and the outcomes were pretty much the same: the feeling that we had something important to do abroad, that this abroad was in fact part of our social universe, and that invasions, violence, and a lot of blood and suffering were necessary and justified. Once again, such sub-processes of the European "civilizing process" are easy to see in the writings of people like J. Ferry and A. de Tocqueville. Ferry and so many others were convinced they formed a "superior race" (the words used by him in his speech in 1885) which had a mission not only to protect the interests and the status of their nation, but also to spread the better way of life of their "civilization". It was a *mission civilisatrice* in their mind. In the same spirit of mind, Tocqueville had no doubt about the superiority of the "civilized" Europeans in comparison to the "half-civilized" Arabs in Algeria:

> Experience has already shown a thousand times that, whatever the fanaticism and the national spirit among the Arabs, personal ambition and greed have always animated them even more powerfully and caused them accidentally tally to make those resolutions that are most opposed to their usual tendencies. The same phenomenon has always occurred among half-civilized men. The heart of the savage is like a perpetually agitated sea, where the wind does not always blow from the same direction.[21]

The future of these Arabs was inevitable due to their inferiority in the scale of "civilization". They had to be "civilized" whether it was by France or another European state. So, it was better that France do it if it wanted to avoid declining:

> But even if Algiers were to fall back into the hands of the Muslims, which is possible, we can be sure that the Muslim power that would take our place would be very different from the one we have destroyed. It would aim higher, it would have other means of action, it would enter into regular contact with the Christian nations and would be regularly controlled by

> one of them. In a word, it is clear to me that whatever happens, Africa has henceforth entered into the movement of the civilized world and will never leave it.[22]

In this sense, racism and the idea that Europeans had to protect their nations against inferior people were not only Nazis' ideas. How many French people and other Europeans shared these ideas more or less openly? How many French "civilized" individuals collaborated under the Nazi occupation because they shared these views? The main point is that these ideas came with this "civilization" were Europeans learned, through slavery and colonization, to use and destroy other people perceived as being "inferior", "barbarians" and potentially dangerous. Of course, the Holocaust was German and we need specific explanations to understand why it happened in Germany and not in France or Great Britain. But it was also part of this "civilization" nevertheless. Therefore, we ended up with "civilized" people in their own states, at the table, in the bedroom, and so on, who could support destructive violence against other human beings nevertheless—people who lived just besides them, and who were as "civilized" as one can be, in this case.

9 Conclusion

Being critical of Elias's explanations does not mean totally rejecting his views. The approach I suggest in this chapter is to work on specific texts of N. Elias to improve our understanding of our relationship to violence in this civilization. It is an attempt to improve the approach rather than trying to corroborate or refute it as a theory. One does not have to be with Elias or against Elias. This work in progress owes much to comparisons with other approaches and social processes. In brief, I defend the thesis that N. Elias provided useful explanations in many ways, especially for the understanding of social processes which tend to decrease the level of violence in "civilized" states at the national level. However, in spite of his explanations on what he called "decivilizing" processes, or maybe because of them, he did not really understand our ambivalent relationship to violence in modernity. In other words, our civilization is made by processes which tend to decrease the level of violence (as Elias showed, and this is why we should not "reject" him), while other processes tend to increase it (as others showed). This is what I mean by janus-faced modernity. In this logic, the main task is to keep from N. Elias's texts what is useful to

improve our understanding of the ambivalent relationship between our "civilization" and violence; but we also have to modify or reject what needs to be changed, completed or abandoned in order to see the dark side of modernity more accurately.

I can only propose a general and incomplete framework of some social processes in this temporary conclusion—which is more a starting point than a conclusion in fact. And this framework will have to be significantly enhanced and enriched thanks to more readings, empirical observations and critical thinking. For instance, the critical integration of other relevant theories and concepts would have to be done, endlessly I would think and hope. Besides, we have to remember that the presence, the importance and the interconnections of various sub-processes certainly vary in significant ways from one place to another, and from one period of time to another. In brief, the following graphic should be seen as the first draft of an incomplete and ideal-typical framework which highlight some significant social processes which have increase and(or) decrease the level of violence in our civilization. In this sense, it shows the ambivalent relationship we have with violence (Fig. 5.1).

It should be noticed that the same process can favour the increase and the decrease of violence. For example, at the national level, in core countries at least,[23] and most of the time,[24] the formation of the modern state has produced a relative decrease of violence through the monopolization of legitimate violence (as Elias explained). However, at the same time and at the international level notably, this formation has fuelled violence by favouring processes of colonization, for instance, through the competition between ambitious European states and the monopolization of military resources. This story is much more complex of course, but it is clear that these states have contributed in significant ways to our ambivalent relationship to violence in modernity.

In this logic, we can expect different sorts of tensions in our "civilization" in our relationships to violence, reflected for instance by the presence of pacifist habitus, ideas and movements and their counter-habitus, counter-ideas and counter-movements. In one way or another, the main point here is that violence is still a central feature and issue of our time. Violence comes with our civilization and, as such, it is not the sign or the effect of some "breakdowns" of this civilization. In this sense, we have to complete the explanations of Elias by insisting on social phenomena which have been somehow neglected by him, such as: religious beliefs, racist ideologies, capitalism, imperialism, massification and bureaucratization. More

Fig. 5.1 Some key processes explaining the ambivalent relationship between modernity and violence

work would have to be done here, maybe by connecting more clearly the works of Elias with other key thinkers such as Weber, Wallerstein, Arendt and Bauman, for example. We also need to work on new processes—such as global warming and other global environmental crises—which can reinforce pacifying and(or) violent dynamics by reinforcing functional interdependency and a global We-Identity, and(or) higher competition for resources, more fears, less detachment, more nationalisms, and so on. Thus, as one can see, Elias's explanations are still more than relevant to highlight the importance of social phenomena which make our civilization more than a "barbarian" one. We just have to keep going working on the approach in order to complete and improve it.

Notes

1. See Dépelteau, F., Passiani, E. and Mariano, R. (2013).
2. Arendt, Hannah (1973).
3. Horkheimer, Max and Adorno, Theodor (2002, Kindle Locations 85–86).
4. See http://www.histoire.presse.fr/actualite/infos/georges-clemenceau-chambre-30-juillet-1885-22-11-2010-15540 (retrieved on February 4, 2016). My translation of: Regardez l'histoire de la conquête de ces peuples que vous dites barbares et vous y verrez la violence, tous les crimes déchaînés, l'oppression, le sang coulant à flots, le faible opprimé, tyrannisé par le vainqueur! Voilà l'histoire de votre civilisation! […] Combien de crimes atroces, effroyables ont été commis au nom de la justice et de la civilisation. Je ne dis rien des vices que l'Européen apporte avec lui: de l'alcool, de l'opium qu'il répand, qu'il impose s'il lui plaît.
5. For example, see Dunning and Mennell (1996), Mennell (1990) and Pinker (2011).
6. On the relation between high violence and modernity, see for example: Arendt (1973), Bauman (1989), Burkitt (1996), Dépelteau et al. (2013), Gallois (2013), and Rubenstein (2015).
7. Pinker, Steven (2011, Kindle Location 1989).
8. Pinker, Steven (2011, Kindle Locations 368–369).
9. Pinker, Steven (2011, Kindle Location 1374).
10. Pinker, Steven (2011, Kindle Location 1383).
11. Pinker, Steven (2011, Kindle Location 1988).
12. Bauman, Zygmunt (2013). *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Wiley. Kindle Edition, p. 4.
13. For example, see Marx, K. (1992) and Polanyi, K. (2001).
14. See Rubenstein (2015).
15. See de Tocqueville (2001).
16. de Tocqueville (2001, Kindle Location 1382).
17. de Tocqueville (2001, Kindle Location 1336).
18. de Tocqueville (2001, Kindle 1345–1346).
19. Translated by me, FD. From: http://notresiecle.blogs.courrierinternational.com/archive/2009/12/01/jules-ferry-republicains-opportunistes-colonialisme-i.html (retrieved on March 13, 2016).
20. Translated by me (FD) from http://notresiecle.blogs.courrierinternational.com/archive/2009/12/01/jules-ferry-republicains-opportunistes-colonialisme-i.html (retrieved March 14, 2016).
21. de Tocqueville (2001, Kindle Locations 1315–1316).
22. de Tocqueville (2001, Kindle Location 1205).
23. See the chapter of W. March and J. Souza in this book.
24. See the explanations of K. Letterney on the relative and ongoing disintegration of the American State in this book.

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CHAPTER 6

Civilisation and Violence at the Periphery of Capitalism: Notes for Rethinking the Brazilian Civilizing Process

Juliano de Souza and Wanderley Marchi Jr.

1 Introduction

Throughout his work, the German sociologist Norbert Elias (1897–1990) dealt with the antinomy between "individual freedom" and "structural determinism" at the ontological and epistemological levels. His configurational approach is not a simple call for a "sociohistorical" *démarche*, but a call for an epistemological change in terms of relations between sociology and history, as well as between psychology and anthropology. This call is supported by empirical observations about long-term configurations made by interdependent individuals.

The three main "empirical laboratories" used by Elias to develop and test his theses were, as we know, the German, the French and the English

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societies. Comparative analyses of these societies were present in almost all his works, although to different degrees. In *The Germans* (Elias 1996), he was obviously referring to German society. In *The Court Society* (Elias 1983) and *Quest for Excitement* (Elias and Dunning 1986), the French and English societies were the main references. In Elias's masterpiece, *The Civilizing Process* (Elias 2000), the three societies were analyzed using a single comparative method.

Despite the relative particularities and differences between the English, the French and the German civilizing processes, Elias was above all interested in gathering empirical and theoretical elements in order to propose a general theory of the civilizing process. It was intended to be an inspiring theoretical model for the study of civilizing processes in various societies. It is important to highlight, for example, that this model has been used by Mennell (2007) to study the American civilizing process, by Stebbins (2009) to discuss the Chinese civilizing process and by Lucena (2000) to gather some notes on the Brazilian civilizing process in relation to sports and, more specifically, to the history of sports in Rio de Janeiro.

Our goal is neither to examine the specificity of each of these civilizing processes, nor to present an exhaustive analysis of the Brazilian civilizing process. Our purpose is basically to gather arguments to support the hypothesis that the civilizing process did not occur in homogeneous ways among the different social groups that form Brazilian society. In this respect, it was different from what occurred, for example, in France and England. More precisely, in the Brazilian civilizing process the democratization of power and the generalization of a relatively similar psychic economy for all social classes were relatively unsuccessful. This is why there has been a social gulf between the upper classes and the *ralé* ("riffraff"), which is condemned to live in very difficult conditions in this competitive society (Souza 2003, 2006, 2009).

If our thesis is correct, even before the civilizing process started in Brazil there was a violent colonizing process that left its mark not only on social structures and institutions, but also on the subjects' bodies and their social relations. In other words, we suggest that the civilizing process which prevailed in Brazil needs to be carefully analyzed in light of the process of colonization and some of the most oppressive social dynamics in the history of the country resulting from slavery.

2 Class Relations in the Configurational Sociological Perspective

Elias saw the transition from the Middle Ages to the modern age as a long, unplanned—but structured—civilizing process, of which the refinement of standards of behaviour, the control of impulses and the monopolization of taxes and physical violence through the state were central sub-processes. Elias paid particular attention to transformations of relationships between individuals and, above all, to the metamorphosis of the economy of affection of the individuals. He associated these two large changes with the fact that, in the long run, smaller territorial units with unstable centres of power formed larger territorial units with more stable centres of power.

Two central theoretical views support this thesis. First, Elias rejected the conceptual opposition between the individual and society as it is posed in classical sociological theory, where interpretation and analysis predominantly focuses on only one of these two elements at a time. Instead, the Eliasian sociological approach aims at overcoming this dichotomy, and it does so through the concept of social configuration. According to Elias (2000), human beings exist only as pluralities and, together, they form a structural network of people who are mutually oriented and dependent. As configurations change and demand a new attitude from "players", the individuals are compelled to adopt a new "game" ethic (Elias 1970).

Second, Elias used the concept of power as a central element in social configuration. It is always important to remember that this concept is directly related to emotions. It is associated with the increasingly rigorous and severe social control of the impulses and emotions that lie at the heart of the networks of interdependency and, in addition, with the development of individual self-control, which results in safer "social armours". An example of this dynamic is illustrated by Elias in the *The Civilizing Process* and, in particular, in the book *The Court Society*, when he explained the progressive transformation of warriors into courtiers. In doing so, Elias focused on the balance of power in court societies. Not behaving according to the codes which guided the behaviour of courtiers meant almost giving up any chance of benefiting from the potential distribution of power occurring in this type of configuration.

It is evident that this last change did not come by itself, and it did not come from purely rational intentions. It was a slow change in the deep

structure of the personalities of individuals towards greater self-constraint, coming from social pressures arising from the growing differentiation of functions in society and the formation of increasingly extensive chains of interdependency. This change happened through power relations between social strata. It should be noted that as a relational phenomenon coming with psychogenetic and socio-genetic transformations, power does not constitute an "amulet"—an object—that could be in the hands of few actors and of which others would be totally deprived (Elias 1970). For Elias (1970), power is a structural feature of all human relationships, and it is characterized by significant inequalities. In a peripheral society like Brazil, where people live within the illusion of equality, power inequality is predominant between classes of "precarious habitus" and "primary habitus" (Souza 2003), as we will suggest in the next section of this chapter.

In spite of the multiplication of social functions which come with it, according to Elias (2000) one of the most important peculiarities of the European civilizing process is the relative homogenization of standards of conduct between social strata which were initially very different. This social "contamination" happening between the standards of conduct of the highest and the lowest social strata started in court society. It was a centre of social dissemination of one new psychic economy, guided by self-control of affections, and which was fuelled by the search for more refined standards of etiquette. At the same time, it was bourgeois circles that constituted the centre for the spread of a psychic economy in which the dignity of work could prevail.

In other words, Elias (2000) noticed the development of two historically different codes of conduct which were diffused, at their due times and under appropriate conditions, through to the increasing interdependence that was established between the court aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. On one hand, there was a typical code of honour produced by the court nobility to preserve their social prestige in reaction to the rise of the middle classes. On the other hand, the values of the middle classes were based on the idea that work and money would be the new sources of prestige and, even more, a way of increasing the relative power of the bourgeoisie.

The civilizing process of Western European societies, which took place over approximately five centuries, resulted in some kind of fusion between these two codes of conduct from a dynamic of fairly fierce—but less and less violent—fights between nobles and bourgeois. The following excerpt points out how this "social game", the rules of which were defined during

the course of the events, was crucial for what would be seen by the ruling groups as the codes of conduct and values of "civilization":

> In this way modes of conduct of a court-aristocratic upper class were amalgamated with those of the various bourgeois strata as these rose to the position of upper class: *civilité* was incorporated and perpetuated—with certain modifications depending on the situation of its new host—in what was now called "civilization" or, more precisely, "civilized conduct". So, from the nineteenth century onwards, these civilized forms of conduct spread across the rising lower classes of Western society and over the various classes in the colonies, amalgamating with indigenous patterns of conduct. Each time this happens, upper-class conduct and that of the rising groups were interpenetrate. The standard of conduct of the rising class, its pattern of commands and prohibitions, reflects in its structure the story of the rise of this class. So it comes about that the typical "drive and conduct-pattern" of the different industrial nation states, their "national character", still represents the nature of the earlier power-relationships between nobility and bourgeoisie and the course of the century-long struggles between them, from which a specific type of middle-class groups in the end emerged for a time as the dominant establishment. (Elias 2000, p. 428)

As we can see, one of the most remarkable characteristics of the civilizing process is the increase of functional interdependency between different social strata and the progressive reduction of contrasts between these groups. The aristocratic classes were compelled, with the rise of the bourgeoisie, to value work as a way of earning a living. This, in turn, did not prevent them from acquiring the status of the "good society" through the stylization and the refinement of daily behaviours. However, this stylization was slowly appropriated by other emerging social groups.

The bourgeois strata and the professional classes did not simply imitate the standards of conduct and etiquette of the upper stratum. They developed a super-ego cast in the courtier circle, but with some variations, according specific features to these modes of conduct. In other words, the emergent bourgeoisie lived a kind of internal contradiction, adopting the codes of conduct of the upper stratum even if they were unable to follow them so easily (Elias 2000). When a fraction of the bourgeoisie ascended to the level of the upper stratum, the assimilation process was characterized by a phase of repulsion related to the development of self-awareness by both groups, due to their increasing rivalry. At this time, the differences between the two strata were again reinforced. But in spite

of these repulsion tendencies this "tug of war"—which lasted about five centuries—led to the reduction of contrasts between the two strata, and the development of a more uniform code of conduct. In this regard, and according to Elias (2000, p. 433), it is possible to consider as an outcome of this process that: "[…] the code of conduct which the leading bourgeois group develop when they finally take over the function of the upper class is, because of the preceding phase of assimilation, the product of an amalgamation of the codes of the old and new upper classes".

3 Class Relations from the Perspective of Selective Modernization Theory

According to the Brazilian sociologist Jessé Souza (2003), a social class should not be understood in terms of differential access to incomes or to places that individuals occupy in one mode of production. A social class is associated with a mode of conduct inherited from the family (with lower or higher cultural capital). Above all, a social class refers to a stimulus towards some behaviour; and when this behaviour is appropriate to the kind of personality that the market and the modern state need for their daily reproduction, it tends to maximize the chances of success of individuals in their struggle for scarce resources. When the behavioural structure coming from the family does not match the needs of the market and the state, we witness the massive production of individuals—a whole class of individuals—who are not adapted to the rules of the game and condemned, therefore, to social disqualification and neglect.

Souza (2003) found the conceptual tools for this theory in two of the most notable critical approaches that have emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. One of them is the critical theory of social recognition formulated by the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor; the other is the sociological theory of Pierre Bourdieu, more specifically his theory of habitus and social distinction. Such tools were appropriated by Souza in order to unveil the "spontaneous ideology of capitalism" both in central and peripheral modernity, with an explicit emphasis on the latter. In other words, Souza wanted to "[…] enlighten a specific case: the experience of the naturalization of inequality in peripheral societies such as Brazil" (Souza 2003, p. 63, our translation).

By doing so, he sought to combine a theory of social action with a theory of morality to explain the mass production of a *ralé nacional* ("national riffraff") or of *gentinha* ("little people"). In Brazil, this social

group had already been the subject of the classic study by Florestan Fernandes (2008) of the African-descendant riffraff in the city of São Paulo. According to Souza, Fernandes correctly thematized the causes of the production of a social abyss in terms of inequality and injustice in the post-abolition Brazilian society. However, he "failed" to properly explain how such order had been produced and reproduced. In fact, Fernandes gave excessive weight to the racial component (skin colour) in his analysis, confusing it with the class dynamic of the habitus in the Bourdieusian sense of the term (Souza 2006).

To solve this problem, Souza (2003) created the notion of "precarious habitus" and gave it a central value that explained the mass production of socially disqualified groups in Brazil. In association with a national identity perceived as a virtue (the Brazilian one), this process of social disqualification came with one of the characteristics of the Brazilian modernization process: the naturalization of social inequalities. In this dynamic, people from the lower strata are identified as being responsible for their own pain and suffering. Many poor people even perceived themselves in this way.

By combining the notion of class habitus of Bourdieu with the hermeneutics of meaning and morals of Taylor (from *Sources of the Self*), Souza redefined this concept in order to avoid what he considered to be the excessive contextualism of Bourdieu's work. From this theoretical reconstruction, the author presented the concept of primary habitus and then, the concepts of precarious habitus and secondary habitus (Souza 2003, pp. 167–168).

Generally speaking, the primary habitus can be defined as an objectively incorporated and internalized scheme of evaluation and disposition for action, which allows a sense of effective dignity, in the transclassicist way defined by Taylor (Souza 2003, p. 166). In other words, the primary habitus refers to an evaluative assumption guiding ways of seeing, acting and, especially, acknowledging other members of the same strata as people being equal and worthy of consideration. It allows us to see these others as productive beings, who are useful and respected in society.

However, in peripheral societies such as the Brazilian one, the primary habitus could not be significantly generalized and homogenized to all classes. Instead, a considerable part of the population was provided with a precarious habitus. It means that in the context of a society only interested in a personality characterized by prospective calculation, control of affections and productive work, the excluded have been deprived not only of material goods but also, above all, of respect and the recognition of

their own human value. In short, precarious habitus denotes a condition of inadaptability in relation to the competitive capitalist order. Lower strata receive a low social recognition from those who hold the primary habitus. Once again, these little people see themselves as if they were guilty of something, as if they deserve the poor conditions in which they live. Therefore, in addition to the pervasive inequalities characterized by the distribution of economic and cultural capitals, the segregating ideology of individual merit is generalized to all classes and ends up being the logic which guides modern relationships, whether the agents are aware of it or not.

Now, the secondary habitus requires the incorporation of the primary habitus, and it establishes criteria of social distinction from what Bourdieu called "taste" (Souza 2003, p. 167). In other words, as an evaluative scheme of the middle and upper classes, the secondary habitus requires not only the recognition of useful producers of the primary habitus, but also the stylization of life, where taste start to act as an "invisible currency" which produces distinctions and turns "[…] both the pure economic capital and, specially, the cultural capital […] into a set of social signs of legitimate distinction" (Souza 2003, p. 172).

Regarding the secondary habitus, no great difference is observed between the modern societies of the centre and of the periphery (Souza 2006, p. 44). The essential difference, in this case, lies in the absence of an effective generalization of the primary habitus to all strata composing the peripheral societies. Once more, it lies in the mass production of "a bunch of disqualified" with precarious habitus in the peripheral countries.

In this sense, the singularity of a peripheral society, like the Brazilian one, is not based on the *cultura do jeitinho* (the culture of "finding a way around") or the *mito nacional* ("national myth"). Rather, it arises from the mass production of a number of people who do not meet the emotional, affective and moral conditions that would enable them to participate in the quest for prestige and power. And in this logic, primary habitus holders do not compete with precarious habitus carriers. "People" do not compete with "non-people" (Corrêa 2006, p. 380).

Therefore, "the modernity of countries like Brazil is 'deficient', selective and peripheral because there there has never been a social and political effort directed and thought of for the effective equalization of the social conditions of lower classes" (Souza 2009, p. 401, our translation). Souza also points out that it was only when the European working class, through bloody fights and recognition processes, could demonstrate that they contributed as much as the other classes to social development, and

had therefore become worthy of recognition, that civil, political and social rights were also historically extended to them (Souza 2009, p. 394).

In order to explain how this immense gap separating the central and the peripheral societies was produced, Souza used a genetic approach based on the assumption that, in central modernity, ideas that made the world preceded the practices, whereas in peripheral societies the opposite happened. In his words:

> […] this type of schematization, specific of societies of the "new periphery", such as the Brazilian one, can be better understood if we see it less as "positivity", in the sense of the almighty premodern heritage of the theories of modernization and contemporary hybridity, and more as "negativity", that is, as the absence of certain preconditions existing in central modernity. Authors such as Max Weber and Charles Taylor, as we observed, emphasize the fact that in central modernity societies ideas precede institutional and social practices. I believe this idea is true, and that this belief inspired these two authors to seek a genealogical hermeneutics of the meaning, already opaqued by the disciplinary institutional practices, the cognitive and moral sources that underlie Western rationalism. An important specificity of peripheral modernity—the "new periphery"—seems to be precisely the fact that, in these societies, *modern "practices" precede modern "ideas"* [italic added]. Thus, when market and state, albeit in a gradual, fragmental and initial way, are imported from the outside along with the Europeanization of the first half of the nineteenth century, the moral consensus that follows the same process in Europe and North America does not exist. There was not, for example, a consensus on the need for social homogenization and generalization of the type of personality and bourgeois emotional economy to all social strata, as there was in all major societies in Europe and North America. (Souza 2003, pp. 98–99, our translation)

The theory of selective modernization proposed by Souza (2003) provides an interpretation of Brazilian modernity as an exogenous process in discontinuity with Portugal. The process of modernization is not seen as the reminiscence of premodern, traditional or personal dispositions, but, instead, as the result of the export, from the centre to the periphery, of the main modern rationalizing institutions (the state and the market) without, however, the related moral configurations one can find in central capitalism. The absence of this moral "background", which supported the action of the state and market in central modernity, was perceived by Souza (2009) as something decisive in the implementation of distinct social and cultural dynamics in peripheral modernity. To be more precise, this kind of

theoretical reconstruction allowed Souza to solve two problems at once. First, the author can highlight the implicit principles of classification present in the selective modernization process, which have rendered opaque and hidden those consensual and evaluative criteria of hierarchization defining who "is a person" and who "is not a person" in Brazil. Second, Souza proposed a new interpretive framework that would explain, in a more convincing way, the gaps between societies without essentializing Brazilian culture and social life. The following excerpt clarifies this point:

> All this sociology of the "origin of the Portuguese evil" considers the European cultural influence on the New World as a "transposition of values and ideas" which would have been passed forward as "clothes". Thus, the simple transposition of Portuguese individuals to Brazil would be the equivalent to the formation of a "great Portugal" in colonial Brazil and, as with "culturalism" "culture" never changes or learns, the present modern Brazil would be just the continuation of premodern Portugal. […] Actually, one cannot separate "culture" from "institutions", and from the institutional and social practices, that affect every individual behaviour, even the one which has to do with changing, and not just with the mere reproduction of the world as it is. Thus, the Portuguese who colonized Brazil and built here a society dominated by the "institution" of slavery, which existed in Portugal only in temporary and local ways, were no longer the Portuguese as they would be in Portugal, because all their behaviour, expectations, hopes and fears were completely different, whether they were aware of it or not. In this sense, they could even have continued to speak Portuguese and eat cod and sardines on Sundays, but the world of social institutions and relationships that they created here had very little to do with their own world in Europe. (Souza 2009, pp. 104–105, our translation)

One issue should be highlighted here. The culture cannot be thought through without concrete structural references to support it. Both in central and peripheral modernities, the structural realities, whether the agents know it or not, are the centralized state and the competitive market. Moreover, it is important to point out that processes of dissemination and circulation of cultural goods are not static. They are constantly subjected to new constructions and reinterpretations. In turn, those processes are only possible through a dynamic which involves, dialogically, agents and structures, and which has an effective institutional anchoring in the market and the state, so that the diffusion of cultural models can reach, on a significant scale, the whole of society.

4 A Selective Civilizing Process? The Dynamics of the Spread of Civilization Across the Periphery

The blind social process presented in the first section of this chapter—the interweaving of patterns of conduct of different social groups and their decisive role in building a uniform variant of civilized conduct—is not restricted to Western European societies. Due to the increasing formation of networks of interdependence, it expanded to different regions of the world "[…] whether through the settlement of Occidentals or through the assimilation of the upper strata of other nations, just as models of conduct earlier spread within the West itself from this or that upper stratum, from certain courtly or commercial centres" (Elias 2000, p. 384). In this sense, what might be called the "spread of civilization" is, in other words, the spread of Western institutions and standards of conduct over regions beyond the West (Elias 2000, p. 383). According to Elias:

> This spread of the same patterns of conduct from the "white mother-countries or father-lands" follows the incorporation of the other areas into the network of political and economic interdependencies, into the sphere of elimination struggles between and within the nations of the West. It is not "technology" which is the cause of this change of behaviour; what we call "technology" is itself only *one* of the symbols, one of the last manifestations of that constant foresight imposed by the formation of longer and longer chains of actions and the competition between those bound together by them. "Civilized" forms of conduct spread to these other areas because and to the extent that in them, through their incorporation into the network whose centre the West still constitutes, the structure of their societies and of human relationships in general, is likewise changing. Technology, education—all these are facets of the same overall development. In the areas into which the West has expanded, the social functions with which the individual must comply are increasingly changing in such a way as to induce the same constant foresight and affect-control as in the West itself. Here, too, the transformation of the whole of social existence is the basic condition of the civilization of conduct. For this reason we find in the relationship between the West to other parts of the world the beginnings of the reduction in contrasts which is peculiar to every major wave of the civilizing movement. (Elias 2000, p. 384)

Therefore, we can think that the ever-wider spread of civilization, through the extension of the chains of interdependency linking different parts of the world to the West and vice versa, was one of the unplanned gears that

set the European colonizing movement in motion. Hence, the importance of Elias's (2000) socio-genesis of the concept of civilization, since it was from their "civilizing ideals", so important for the "good society", that "European conquerors" led their colonizing campaigns to the Americas and Africa. In turn, this tendency to "export" the civilizing process to the colonies does not mean that the spread of Western patterns of conduct was imposed solely from the top to the bottom. Occasionally, it also came from the bottom up, to the point that they merged and formed new varieties of civilized behaviour (Elias 2000).

A more precise investigation of the merging of codes of conduct that occurred between the upper and lower social strata in the European colonies and, later, in the autonomous nation states that each of these former colonies came to be, would require rigorous empirical examination and a deep historical knowledge of the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized people. In order to interpret how this process happened in Brazil, it would be necessary to resort to, for example, the historiography of Gilberto Freyre developed in *Casa Grande e Senzala* (*The Masters and the Slaves*) and *Sobrados e Mucambos* (*The Mansions and the Shanties*), as well as to the historiography of Florestan Fernandes, presented especially in the books *A integração do negro na sociedade de classes* (*The Integration of Blacks into Class Society*) and *A revolução burguesa no Brasil* (*The Bourgeois Revolution in Brazil*). For the purposes of this chapter, however, it is enough to base our illustration on Jessé Souza's argument (2003, 2006, 2009), which was influenced in many ways by the analyses of Freyre and Fernandes.

Following this, it is appropriate to emphasize that by insisting on the importance of the spread of social and self-controls, Elias (2000) referred to the type of personality that state and market require for their good social functioning, as Souza (2006, 2009) explained it for class relations in Brazil. Moreover, Elias also warned us that from the same "social mould" emerged the "well-adjusted" and the "mal-adjusted" (Elias 1994, p. 204). Once more, this is the main difference between the European civilizing process and the civilizing process "exported" to the former colonies of European countries.

In sum, after successive conflicts, the European and North American civilizing processes resulted in the relative homogenization of the emotional economy for different social strata, whereas in Brazil and other peripheral societies it did not happen. In the case of the Brazilian civilizing process, a large group of maladjusted people was produced, including the populations of newly freed black and rural dependent white people

(Souza 2006, p. 58). This unadapted contingent of individuals formed the so-called "little people" Fernandes (2008) referred to in his classic study in the 1960s:

> Prohibitions of social nature, which weighed on blacks and mulattos because of their lower social situation, also weighed on "white plebeans" and "poor immigrants". *All formed the undifferentiated mass of riffraff strictly maintained "in their place"* [italics added], despite all the statements of urbanity, of sympathy and intimacy of "supporting people". (Fernandes 2008, p. 390, our translation)

Currently, in Brazil this class of precarious individuals represents almost one-third of the population (Souza 2009). This is where the main conflict of this society lies: in the abyss which separates those who are well adjusted from the mal-adjusted riffraff. This conflict is something like a scar on the Brazilian national consciousness. Moreover, it is possible that this scar, a cause of shame and hatred, may be seen in daily life even if it is lived as a symbolic violence through social processes of mimetism where lower strata imitate upper ones.

In this sense, it is important to highlight that Elias recognized the differences between ascending and declining (or stagnant) social classes in terms of expectations and emotional reactions. In this dynamic, the upper classes are imitated by the ascending classes. In Elias's words:

> And this shaping of the super-ego on upper-class models also brings about in the rising class a specific form of shame and embarrassment. These are very different from the sensibilities of lower groups from which there is no chance of individual ascent. The behaviour of these lower groups may be coarser, but is more uniform and in a way more of a piece. They live more vigorously in their own world without any claim to upper-class prestige, and therefore with greater scope for discharge of affects; they live more fully in accordance with their own manners and customs. Their inferiority vis-à-vis the upper class, their gestures both of subordination and resistance, are clear and relatively unconcealed like their affects, bound by clear, definite forms. In their consciousness they and the other classes have for better or worse their clearly defined positions. (Elias 2000, p. 431)

In Brazil, the individuals who are maladjusted to the demands of the civilizing process are a mass phenomenon. It affects large sectors of the population. In central societies, on the other hand, this phenomenon

is more marginal since "civilizing waves" have expanded much more homogeneously in all directions. Besides, the inferior social strata of Western Europe were composed of extremely active agents in their ascension. They resisted, they were fighting to change their position:

> In the past, the functions of the lower strata of manual workers were generally involved in the web of interdependencies only to the extent that their members felt the effect of remote actions and—if they were unfavourable—*responded with unrest and rebellion, with short-term discharges of affect*. [italics added] (Elias 2000, pp. 380–381)

Of course, we also saw the formation of an outsider group in Western European societies. But through their struggles, their work and a code of conduct compatible with the expectations of both the state and the market, many of them finally rose to respected and positively recognized social levels. Evidently, during this process, and for structural reasons specific to each society, many were left behind: mostly the individuals who were not able to impose on themselves more self-control of affects and, above all, who could not develop prospective calculations.

It seems that in Brazil, the riffraff could not form an organized outsider group with the moral, affective, emotional and existential predispositions necessary to ascend, socially speaking. The historical roots of this hopeless and humiliating collective "fate" reserved to the riffraff go back to the violent relationships of the colonial period; to the fact that slaves were deprived of the necessary psycho-social conditions to be active agents of their own quest for freedom; and, finally, because the "white plebeians" and the "poor immigrants" have not, as second nature, internalized those fundamental psycho-social components in order to effectively integrate into a competitive society.

The ongoing existence of the Brazilian riffraff, deprived of respect in a competitive society, indicates that the "civilizing movement" may not have brought a functional democratization of power. Once again, the riffraff have stayed on the margins of Brazilian society. They have not been fully included in the "civilizing process", except as the servants of the upper classes:

> But what about the riffraff as a class "bodies" without knowledge (cultural capital) or money (economic capital)? Why don't they react to their daily worthlessness and humiliation? After all, to the Brazilian middle class,

> although having its own tragedies, the world is, at least in the material sense "very good." *There is a dispossessed class that works for them for little, takes care of their children, their home, their food, prevents gender struggle over the division of household chores, offers low-priced sexual services in profusion, and so on*. [Italics added] (Souza 2009, p. 410, our translation)

This kind of observation is important. It raises the problem that, even if there are mutual dependencies between the upper classes and the lower classes, the balance of power has not been really democratized. On the contrary, in the Brazilian civilizing process, the balance of power seems to have stubbornly remained in favour of the former.

This persistent undemocratic balance of power, which has prevented the riffraff from upward social mobility, also comes from other factors such as the indifference of the upper classes, family destructuration, the bad faith of institutions and the lack of more effective policies for inclusion in the long run (Souza 2009). This is also why Souza (2009), as Fernandes (2008) did during his research on the integration of African-descendant populations in a class society, warned us that the relations between these groups are not limited to pure power relations. They are also characterized by intersubjective moral evaluations which tend to reinforce respect for "equals" (the insiders) and hostility and prejudices against "unequals".

5 Violence: An "Existential Cry" at the "Fringes" of the System

The riffraff of Brazil—or of any other country with a peripheral modernization experience—have not passively endured their pain and social deprivation. It would be naive to imagine those groups, which are structurally pushed to the "fringes" of the system, not reacting in any way to the dynamic of social dispossession which has affected them in the capitalist order since the slavery-based society. The African descendants were somehow included in the social order through the "mansion" complex, even if their conditions could be humiliating. It is true that, as observed by Souza (2003), these groups—including formally "free" people irrespective of their colour—have created solidarity ties, shared a more or less homogeneous notion of community, produced alternative forms of cultural sociability, and so on. But it is no less true, as we have suggested in the previous section, that the ascension of these groups depends, to a greater or lesser degree, on the development of a type of personality, or

rather a specific habitus, that is associated with productive people and is suitable for the competitive capitalist order.

For those who are not integrated, it is in this general context that violence has emerged as a form of predominant practice which is often naturalized. The importance of violent practices can be reinforced by the absence of effective state apparatuses of coercion. Once again, the work of Elias (2000) helps us to understand the effect of relatively weak states on violence at the periphery. According to Souza:

> In the absence of external forms of behaviour regulation, either through external regulatory mechanisms or internalized moral codes, *violence emerges as accepted and legitimated conduct, being perceived as the only way to restore the integrity of the deprived* [italics added]. Here, reputations are expressed in sentences like "he does not take it lying down" or […] "that guy is a macho, he is not afraid of anyone". Conflicts tend to take the form of death struggles, due to the impossibility of negotiations that could limit the conflicts to limited proportions. Thus, it is not just the material poverty and scarcities that are basic explanatory factors of the moral horizon of the dependent, but especially their spiritual, moral and symbolic poverty, in a broad sense, which makes *violence the only legitimate code*. [italics added] (Souza 2003, p. 124, our translation)

In this citation, Souza is referring not only to the black populations after slavery, freed under the Golden Law of 1888 and preceding legislative amendments, and left to their fate in a new competitive social context. He is also referring to an entire class of maladjusted people, including white immigrants who worked in coffee plantations, for instance. However, it is important to highlight that the former slaves were clearly disadvantaged in relation to poor immigrants, mainly due to confusion surrounding the obligations of their contracts of employment.

This confusion in assessing the new social structure played a key role in the shaping of "exclusion areas" in the country, even if other factors were also important, such as the logic by which the social structuration started to be justified by eugenic and health ideas in the early twentieth century, and the process of ordering and reconstruction of urban spaces that culminated in the formation of modern cities. A concrete example is the emergence of the first *favela* (slum) in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the *Morro da Providencia* (Providence Hill) area occupied by former slaves and combatants in 1897. According to Vaz (1994), Valladares (2000) and Perlman (2002), two factors contributed to the formation of this slum:

the unfulfilled promise to provide safe housing for soldiers sent to the Canudos War, and the mass occupation of the central area of Rio, in tenement buildings, by former slaves (among others). The resulting policies led to the displacement of these populations to "alternative" living spaces. The chaotic occupation of the Hill, and of similar ones in other Brazilian regions, coupled with inherent racism in Brazilian society, probably contributed to the emergence, or strengthening, of a series of pathological and negative evaluations associated with former slaves and the poor who ended up in crowded *favela*s. "Marginals", "hostile", "criminals", "lazy", "tramps", "violent" and "dangerous" were and remain some of the terms used to label them. In this logic, the riffraff have become more an issue for the police than a political one, since dominant social representations have been based on the "myth of marginality" discussed by the anthropologist Janice Perlman (2002). These representations fulfil the ideological function of "[…] preserving the social order that generated them […]" (Perlman 2002, p. 290, our translation); and in doing so, they become necessary to reaffirm the monopoly of violence of the state and the police over those sectors considered to be "deviant".

This dynamic does not constitute a typical example of the "established–outsider" relation analyzed in the classic study by Elias and Scotson (1994). The emergence of slums is not exclusively the result of disputes over status, prestige and recognition. After all, the newly liberated slaves were already the excluded; they were the "losers" and the victims of institutional and symbolic violence when the new post-slavery order emerged. Even so, there are theoretical elements of the "established–outsider" relationship which can be used to support the hypothesis that the groups that were pushed to the outskirts of large cities—and this certainly still applies today—were not passive in this dynamic. On the contrary, they tended to respond with symbolic and physical counterattacks, although these had almost no effect on the established. The relational and dialogical character of the dynamics of the "established–outsider" as described by Elias occurs in the following way:

> Unmitigated contempt and one-sided stigmatization of outsiders without redress, such as the stigmatization of the untouchables by the higher castes in India, or that of the African slaves or their descendants in America, signals a very uneven balance of power. Attaching the label of "lower human value" to another group is one of the weapons used in a power struggles by superior groups as a means of maintaining their social superiority. In that

> situation the social slur cast by a more powerful upon a less powerful group usually enters the self-image of the latter and, thus, weakens and disarms them. Accordingly, the power to stigmatize diminishes or even goes into reverse gear when a group is no longer able to maintain its monopolisation of the principal resources of power available in a society and to exclude other interdependent groups—the former outsiders—from participation in these resources. As soon as the power disparities or, in other words, the unevenness of the balance of power, diminishes, the former outsider group, on their part, tend to retaliate. They resort to counter-stigmatization, as negroes do in America, as peoples formerly subject to European domination do in Africa and as a former subject class, the industrial workers, do in Europe itself. (Elias 1994, pp. xx–xxi)

As we have suggested, Elias analyzed the relationships between interdependent human groups as part of dynamic configurations which are moved by a "balance of power". When there is a great power imbalance, there is a continuing effort to rebalance relations in such a way that ongoing events do not become unbearable for the weaker ones. In central and modern countries, in which the "civilizing waves" progressed in a more or less homogeneous way and in all social directions, power works as a mediating element. It leads to wider participation in social games, albeit under unequal conditions. In peripheral societies, the riffraff is relatively absent both from relations of power and from public debate.

In the absence of a "peaceful social contract" giving a voice to different classes and providing greater fluidity and mobility in society, compensatory ways of being socially noticed tend to be used, even if they are not planned as such. In the absence of efficient mechanisms to express discontent, physical violence, fuelled by the desire for revenge, is a common reaction of the riffraff. Of course, the Brazilian elites also use physical violence through "their" police, for example. There are, in short, various acts of violence that emerge from the different patterns of social actions and reactions, and from the unequal distribution of resources. It is under these circumstances that violence is like an unplanned structural effect, or even an "existential cry" from the fringes of society:

> From the grey outsider areas which are formed around most of the large cities in the more developed societies people, especially young people, look through the windows of the established world. *They can see that a more meaningful, more fulfilled life than theirs is possible.* Whatever its intrinsic meaning, it has meaning for them and they know, they may perhaps only

> feel, that they are deprived of it for life. And though they often come to believe that a great wrong has been done to them, it is not always quite clear by whom. Hence, vengeance is often their battlecry. One day the pot boils over and they try to avenge themselves on someone. (Elias 1986, p. 57)

This citation comes from the book *Quest for Excitement*, where Elias addressed the potential relationships between violence in football and social discontent among young people of the lowest working classes in England. Beyond the general unequal material conditions or the lack of meaning and recognition in the lives of young outsiders, it is important to take into account the human experience specific to this social group (Elias 1986). According to Elias (1986), violence can be a moment which gives some meaning to their monotonous lives, or a moment when they dare to take revenge, with little meaning. By gathering in groups and by being socialized in this "spirit of belonging", marginalized young people find the courage to express their anger through destructive behaviours directed against the physical structures of the urban space, fans of rival teams, the established and their world, and against their own peers and whoever dares to cross their path.

This violence can also be directed against other marginalized people, especially women and younger generations who are vulnerable in the structural context of the slums. In the Brazilian slums, analyzed by Jessé Souza and his collaborators in the book *A ralé brasileira: quem é e como vive* (Souza 2009), people have their own codes expressed in sentences like "the slum or the hill has its own law". This is not, of course, a matter of blaming, criminalizing or absolving the riffraff for the acts of violence. The main goal of this analysis is rather to show the importance of the unequal civilizing process that is going on in Brazilian society.

Finally, this analysis has to integrate the role of organized crime in the Brazilian slums, suggesting a new and complex network of interdependency which, by the way, involves the interests of very powerful actors. There are groups which are interested in preserving this order based on violence. The people most affected in this logic are obviously not the established elites as they are relatively protected in the safe areas of large Brazilian urban centres, but the ultimate riffraff. They are always in a precarious position in fights with the police and other actors, where they become trapped in a vicious circle of unhappiness and atrocities that affect them long term.

6 Final Considerations

In this chapter, we have used the theory developed by Jessé Souza on the selective modernization process and the theory of Norbert Elias. We have also underlined: (1) the imprint of slavery on Brazilian society; (2) the transplanting of the modern market and state to a society devoid of the moral configuration that supported the functioning of such institutions in Europe; and (3) the mass production of a neglected social class, the riffraff.

Having established the differences between the civilizing/modernization process analyzed by Elias in Europe and the peripheral modernization process analyzed by Souza, we tried to make an inventive appropriation of the Eliasian theoretical framework in order to restore and enumerate the structural features of the peripheral civilizing processes. We believe it is legitimate to make adjustments to theoretical frameworks, whether classical or contemporary, to reinforce their power to analyze a variety of social structures.

As a final observation, at present we are not aiming to perform any empirical investigation in support of the theoretical arguments presented in this chapter. We present, rather, some preliminary conjectures, taking into consideration the theory of selective modernization of Jessé Souza (2003), which allows us to suggest at least some characteristics of the civilizing process in the Brazilian peripheral society.

In brief, the relative absence of the imposition of standards of conduct by the colonizers on the colonized, by the lords on the slaves, by the elite and intermediate segments on the lower classes, did not favour the development of the kind of personality structure that would have allowed a better adaptation to the capitalist order. Under these circumstances, such groups were structurally pushed to the system's "fringes" and, from their marginalized positions, used violence as an "existential cry".

Only empirical research would be able to corroborate or refute this hypothetical framework. Therefore, we would like to encourage more Eliasian researchers to contribute to this work, gathering more appropriate knowledge and tools to study and reveal the socio-genesis of peripheral civilizing and uncivilizing processes, as well as to re-establish their respective individual features.

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CHAPTER 7

Self-Inflicted Wound: On the Paradoxical Dimensions of American Violence

Kyle W. Letteney

1 Introduction

A glimpse into America's past finds a history rooted in violence. After all, America's formation was the direct result of centuries of conflict between native groups and competing global superpowers. The instrumental use of violence that eventually led to the United States achieving its goals of independence and westward expansion has undoubtedly shaped the way America perceives itself and the rest of the world. Historically, violence has been a fundamental component of America's domestic and international policies as a means of implementing Western standards of interdependence, mutual identity and civility. In *Politics as a Vocation* (1965), Weber et al. defines the state as an entity that claims a "monopoly on the legitimate use of violence". Norbert Elias would later expand this concept to include the "monopolist mechanism" or the increasing centralization of violence and competition in the hands of the state (Elias 2000, p. 268). The concentration of violence in the hands of the American state can be traced back to the mass relocation of Native Americans and the violent suppression of their culture. More recently, the strategic violence that permeates

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America's international policies has become more pronounced as a result of America's response to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001. Following the attacks, political leaders and media pundits in the United States and around the world frequently deployed the term "civilization" to separate America's enemies from the rest of the civilized world (Mennell 2007, p. 21; Mennell 1990).

Nearly a month after 11 September 2001 when it became known that Osama bin Laden had masterminded the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, former President Bush painted a picture of the immediate threats to American freedom. On 6 November 2001 President Bush stated, "This is an evil man that we're dealing with, and I wouldn't put it past him to develop evil weapons to try to harm civilization as we know it" (CNN 2001). Former Secretary of State Colin Powell also deployed rhetoric distinguishing between the civilized and uncivilized world, stating in an interview with Jim Lehrer, "The attack that took place in Washington and the attack that took place in New York were directed against America, but they really are directed against civilization" (Department of State Archives 2001). The talk of an attack on civilization, coupled with the "you are either with us or against us" rhetoric, set the stage for America and her allies to wage a global war on those who threaten the Western idea of civilization. In other words, America would use the events of 11 September 2001 as an opportunity to secure its international monopoly of violence in the form of a borderless military campaign. Nearly sixteen years later, America is still engaged in conflicts resulting from its campaign against terror which has claimed thousands of American lives, hundreds of thousands of civilian lives, and trillions of dollars of America's budget. Whether or not America's international paradigm of violence has made the world a safer, more civilized place has yet to be seen. The international death tolls from America's global war on terror and the rise of a more violent generation of radicals in the Middle East serve as an antithesis to America's claim to be a global a force for good. America's attempt at establishing a monopoly on violence abroad has been met with a contradictory domestic paradigm of violence. Despite the decrease in violent crime in the United States, American citizens still outkill each other compared to nations at a similar stage of development, with the country experiencing a number of violent episodes in recent years in the form of mass shootings and police involved in killings of unarmed suspects. According to *The Guardian's* database of US police killings, American law-enforcement agencies kill more in days than other countries

do in years. In the first 24 days of 2015 the US experienced 59 fatal police shootings, while countries like Great Britain have only experienced 55 fatal police shootings in the last 24 years (The Guardian, Lartey 2015; Swaine et al. 2015). The number of fatal shootings in the United States in which police are involved reveals a disturbing over-reach of the state's attempt to secure its monopoly of violence at home.

America's international and domestic paradigms of violence show how monopolies of violence can contradict one another by creating conditions that allow violence to flourish rather than stemming its reproduction. This chapter explores America's international and domestic paradigms of violence within the context of Elias's work on civilizing processes, the development of human aggression, monopolies of violence, and social integration and disintegration. My research on the original writings of N. Elias archived at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach, Germany allows me to further explain the historical progressions of American violence both domestically and abroad since the turn of the twenty-first century. I build from and extend Elias's conceptions of monopolies of violence and what constitutes civilizing and decivilizing trends within the larger scope of socio-historical developmental processes. My overarching argument is that the historical trajectories of American violence abroad are irrevocably connected with the practice and conjugation of violence occurring within the country's own borders. The broad and sweeping task of uncovering the complexities of various historical modes and trajectories of American violence is outside the purview of this chapter, which concentrates on several key cultural components of American society that have assisted in its historical progressions of violence. These cultural components include America's deeply held belief in "standing one's ground", free-market competition, hyper-masculinity, rugged individualism and an exceptional self-image. The first two sections of this chapter will be discussions of the international and domestic paradigms of American violence as they relate to the theoretical developments of N. Elias and the works of other Eliasian scholars. Finally, the last section will explore the paradoxical violence these two paradigms have created, where I draw out the decivilizing trends implicit in both. The significance of this work lies in its critical reflexivity of American violence, including how social, technical and psychological developments have shaped the strategic use of violence in today's society, an intellectual endeavour that must adhere to the sociological developments of one of the most under-appreciated thinkers of the twentieth century.

2 America's International Paradigm of Violence

Following the events of 11 September 2001, the White House concluded that in order to combat the international threat of terrorism, it needed to adopt policies that would allow the United States to unilaterally pursue its military interests. The option of a non-military oriented response to the events was highly unlikely and this was confirmed on 7 October 2001, when Operation Enduring Freedom was launched in an attempt to dismantle al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. The title of the military operation would later reveal a high level of fantasy in US policy making. The invasion of Afghanistan was supported by revisions to the National Security Strategy allowing the United States to wage pre-emptive war against its enemies. These revisions are commonly referred to as the Bush Doctrine and were published in the National Security Strategy issued on 17 September 2002 (Monten 2005). The basic tenets of the Bush Doctrine include: making no distinction between terrorists and the nations that harbour them; taking the fight to the enemy overseas before they have the chance to attack us at home; confronting threats before they fully materialize; and advancing alternatives to the enemy's ideology (National Security Strategy 2002). To set the stage, on 20 September 2001 President Bush addressed Congress to outline his vision for strong American leadership in the world.

> Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom—the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time—now depends on us. Our nation—this generation—will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail. (George W. Bush 2001, CNN)

What unfolded in the early stages of America's response to 11 September 2001 can be understood in the context of Stephen Mennell's *The American Civilizing Process*. Using Elias's work as a foundation, Mennell devotes an entire section of his book to violence and aggression in America. One of the concepts that he refers to is the strongly held belief in America of "no duty to retreat" when threatened (Mennell 1990; Mennell 2007, p. 139). Mennell utilizes "no duty to retreat" as a precursor example to explain gun violence in America and I argue that this deeply held philosophy of standing one's ground can also be used to explain America's past and present military intervention in the Middle East. In his book *No Duty to Retreat* (1994) Richard Brown states that the prevailing attitude of standing one's

ground has become second nature to most white Americans (Brown 1994, preface). In Eliasian terms, second nature is defined by "habitus", referring to the ways in which our feelings and behaviours are learned and internalized from early childhood onwards (Elias 1985–1986; Elias 2000, p. 141). Similarly to Elias's notion of habitus formation, America's foreign policy has internalized a military-oriented policy structure that dates back to the Cold War tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States. Now the rhetoric of "The Evil Empire" has been replaced with "The Axis of Evil" as our attention has gradually shifted to the Middle East. This is not to say that Cold War tensions have disappeared, rather the energy that was invested in maintaining a stand-off with the Soviet Union has provided the conditions with which to sustain major international conflicts. Andrew Alexander ponders the long-term consistency of US foreign policy, asking whether or not America's policies of sustained intervention in the Middle East are in fact continuations of past policy strategies (Alexander 2011, p. 297). Alexander posits that a major precursor event that spearheaded America's involvement in the Middle East began in 1953 with the American- and British-sponsored *coup d'état* of the democratically elected Prime Minister of Iran, Mohammad Mosaddegh. His overthrow by foreign governments was the result of Mosaddegh's attempt to audit the books of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, a British-owned company now known as British Petroleum (Alexander 2011, p. 242). As a result of the overthrow, the United States and Britain installed the Western-friendly Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlevi, a monarch who would later establish a totalitarian government over the Iranian people. In 1979, after decades of monarchal rule, opposition and widespread unrest forced the Shah to flee Iran, leading to an attack on the US Embassy in Iran and the subsequent three decades of US–Iranian hostilities (Alexander 2011, p. 243). The tensions between the United States and Iran manifested themselves once again in 1980 during the Iran–Iraq War when the Reagan administration supported Saddam Hussein's border dispute with Iran with military technology and weaponry. After an eight-year war with Iran, Iraq was economically exhausted, resulting in Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwaiti oil fields and paving the way for two Gulf Wars in which America would invest a tremendous amount of military and economic resources.

The confused aims of United States foreign policy in the Middle East continued to progress following the events of 11 September 2001, with the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan becoming symbols of a spectacular setback to peace. America's "stand your ground" foreign policy strategy is

frequently accompanied by attempts at establishing Western-style democracy in occupied countries. According to Alexander, America's claim to stand for democracy in the Middle East is not only untrue, but has left the United States in a rather awkward predicament since most of the America-friendly nations in that region are hardly democratic (Alexander 2011, p. 296). The Western idea of democracy may be appealing to Americans, but there is a profound ignorance—or ignoring (intentional omission)—in America's understanding of the governing traditions of Arab cultures. These misunderstandings create obvious tensions when countries like the United States attempt to implement their own version of democratization with military force. Alexander suggests that unlike Western-style democracy, the structure of Arab society is heavily based on the historical progression of "patrilineal kinship", revolving around the ancestral growth of tribal groups, which encourages both group cohesion and long-lasting feuds (Alexander 2011, p. 296). Tribal and community leaders become a powerful governing force through family status, a cultural undertaking which the democratic powers of the West struggle to comprehend. Elias argues that there is an inevitable connection between dangers and fears—that people's experience of living in dangerous, unpredictable, violent situations actually perpetuates those situations through habitus formation (Elias 2000, p. 105). The "stand your ground" mentality that has permeated American foreign policy since the Cold War has in fact shaped the habitus of those who are forced to confront the violent realities of America's foreign policy. The violence resulting from the confused aims of America's Middles East intervention serves to establish a military-driven international monopoly of violence, one that is cloaked in false promises of democracy and peace.

Since the US military pulled out of Iraq in 2011, troop deployment numbers have fluctuated but have nonetheless decreased. According to the 2013 U.S.- Afghan Bilateral Security Agreement, only 9,800 American troops were suppose to remain in Afgahnistan by the end of 2015 (Olson, 2015; Biaocchi 2013). As of 2016, approximately 8,400 troops remain in the country (Landler, 2016). Despite the withdrawal of American troops, the United States continues to occupy between 700 and 800 military establishments around the world and has adopted new methods of securing an international monopoly of violence by implementing drone warfare and supporting "moderate" militias in the Middle East and elsewhere to combat the rise of radical groups like ISIS (Center for Research on Globalization 2015). Elias suggests that monopolies of violence proceed historically through socio-technical invention, recognizing that technological progressions have a tremendous influence over the way in

which we implement violence (Elias 1981, p. 4; Elias 2008). For example, Elias illustrates how positive progressions in technology that benefit society may also create new, more horrific methods of deploying violence: "Just as the taming of fire favored civilized progress in the cooking of food as well as the barbarian burning down of huts and houses, just as atomic energy is both a plentiful source of energy and a frightening weapon" (Elias 1981, p. 4; Elias 2008). Drone technology may be seen as a technical innovation that keeps soldiers out of harm's way, but it has created a new unseen horror for those innocently caught in its crossfire. On 15 October 2010, Hellfire missiles fired from a Predator drone killed the Pakistan Taliban leader Qari Hussain. For the death of a man that most Americans have never heard of, the drone strike resulted in the deaths of an additional 128 people, thirteen of them children, none of whom were the target of the strike. Human rights group Reprieve conducted an analysis of publicly available data on US drone strikes; their findings indicate that even when operators target specific individuals—the most focused effort of what Barack Obama calls "targeted killing"—they kill vastly more people than their targets, often striking the same target multiple times. As of November 2014, attempts to kill 41 men have resulted in the deaths of an estimated 1,147 people (The Guardian, Ackerman 2014).

Ronald Lorenzo alludes to the work of George Ritzer by describing America's use of drone warfare as the "McDonaldized" efforts of the military establishment to conceal the irrational driving force of revenge under a cloak of systematic technological instruments as rational weaponry (Lorenzo 2014, p. 96). In other words, drone technology serves as a means to veil overtly personal, bloody, violent and emotional killing. Lorenzo states that early Puritan tradition still permeates modern US military culture and that Puritanism sought to suppress spontaneous emotion through systematic action, but failed to curb the impulse for revenge (Lorenzo 2014, p. 111). Such an explanation assumes a high level of historical continuity and ignores the modern developments of American military culture. Rather than resulting from Puritan military tradition, the suppression of emotions and the adaptation of systematic action are in fact traits resulting from the progressions of America's world view following the Second World War. The post-emotional state that Lorenzo ascribes to Puritanical revenge is instead characterized by an anomic form of bloodshed that has become the cornerstone of America's military policy. This anomic bloodshed can be summed up with Elias's conception of the established–outsider relations and the related work of Stephen Mennell.

Mennell believes that the theory of established–outsider relations is the kernel of a broader theory of power ratios which feeds into a collective self-stereotype of unquestioned virtue (Mennell, 2014). America effectively views itself as a "minority of the best", which contributes to the formation of exaggerated they-images based on a "minority of the worst" of other nations. America's self-ascribed exceptional status has also led to a profound ignorance of the corresponding they-images of the United States and its allies that are adopted by weaker outsider groups, who over time eventually become relatively more powerful (Mennell 2015). In both Iraq and Afghanistan there appears to have been an unlimited capacity for America's military to accept anomic bloodshed as a consequence of their internalized they-image of occupied countries. The established–outsider perspective serves as a foundation in America's drone campaign, where a single soldier thousands of miles away can fully subscribe to the belief that they are serving the "minority of the best" without confronting the violent reality of their actions.

When viewed from an Eliasian perspective, America's global war on terror can be described as an attempt to spread webs of interdependence that correlate with the ideas and customs of the West. Elias argued that as chains of interdependence become more defined, a shift takes place in the balance between external constraints and self-constraints (Elias 1985–1986; Elias 2000, p. 365). The United States sees itself as a righteous external constraint within the international community, viewing its efforts as bringing about a more peaceful, connected and predictable world. Elias believed that more equal power ratios and functional democratization would result from the spread of webs of interdependence, meaning more reciprocal controls would be established between more and more social groups (Mennell 2007, p.17). Following the 11 September 2001 attacks the United States attempted to implement its own version of functional democratization. What we have seen unfold is the opposite, a dramatic de-democratization of the Middle East resulting in the rise of even more violent and desperate groups like ISIS who have now taken over swathes of land in both Syria and Iraq. Conflicts between Sunni and Shia factions have become more pronounced, with conflicts spilling over into neighbouring Iran and Turkey. It is hard to imagine that any sense of mutual identification exists in this region. The United States continues to attempt to exert its claim on an international monopoly of violence by supporting conflict groups with military technology and training. The strategic encouragement of violence is, in a sense, a tool for greater international influence and control. America

may not be solely to blame for the violence we see in the Middle East today, but it is far from being an innocent bystander. The internalized "stand your ground" mentality of America's foreign policy, coupled with an exaggerated self-image, attempts at Western-style democratization and the adoption of new technical progressions of violence, have positioned the United States as a major contributor to the violence and incredulity that continues to plague the Middle East.

3 America's Domestic Paradigm of Violence

The other paradigm of violence to discuss relates to the violence occurring within the United States. As America wages war in an attempt to bring about more stability in the world, it has struggled to reconcile the violence occurring within its own borders. The violence that is easily observable in the United States is that of interpersonal violence and state violence against citizens. This display of violence occurring in America is particularly interesting when observed through an Eliasian lens. From the perspective of Elias's civilizing process, "never before in the development of mankind have so many millions of people lived together so peacefully with a considerable reduction of physical violence" (Elias 1981, p. 2; Elias 2008). Elias asserts that state-regulated societies have far more effective means of curbing violence than non-state regulated societies. However true, what we see today in America are signs of a gradual breakdown in the state apparatus and a growing distrust within marginalized communities of the state's authority to use violence. This has resulted in the state implementing an aggressive defensive posture. Recent events across the United States have shown that law-enforcement agencies are willing to deploy violence as a means to retain the state's dominance over the use of violence. Despite these developments, American citizens have been engaging in far less violence compared to the 1970s and 1980s. However, the United States is still the site of frequent mass shootings, gun violence and state-initiated violence against citizens. America is also home to a complex system of structural violence—with some of the largest gaps between poverty and wealth on the planet which lead to both premature and slow deaths of its citizens. For a nation that touts itself as being a shining symbol of all that is good in modernity, it has proved to be strangely archaic.

It is true that over the past several decades violent crimes have decreased in the United States from 597 violent crimes per 100,000 residents in 1980 to 368 violent crimes per 100,000 residents in 2012 (FBI Uniform Crime

Report 2015). Despite this, American citizens still outkill each other compared to similarly developed nations with 12,253 homicides occurring in the United States alone in 2013. In the same year, the United Kingdom experienced 602 homicides, France 777 and Germany 585 homicides (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2015). Population differences may be a factor, but not to the extent where the United States experiences nearly sixteen times the number of homicides compared to its European counterparts. Despite the decrease in violent crime in the United States, the country has experienced a number of violent events in recent years, taking the form of mass shootings and homicides of unarmed suspects involving the police. Such events are nothing new to the United States, but their frequency still warrants criticism and inquiry.

Recently, the United States has been plagued by a string of mass shootings. According to a mass shooting database maintained by the Stanford Geospatial Center, 72 mass shootings in which someone shot three or more people have occurred in the United States since the Sandy Hook massacre in December 2012, which took the lives of twenty children, six adults and the gunman. The database also includes the most recent racially motivated shooting at a historically black church in Charleston, South Carolina which left nine dead (Stanford Geospatial Center 2015). Within the last seven years of Barack Obama's presidency he has had to address the nation on seven separate occasions following a mass shooting. After the 17 June 2015 shooting in Charleston, Obama addressed the nation once again, but this time looking more tired and defeated than in previous statements. He would go on to say,

> At some point, we as a country will have to reckon with the fact that this type of mass violence does not happen in other advanced countries. It doesn't happen in other places with this kind of frequency. (Barack Obama 2015, *The Guardian*)

Despite the fact that mass shootings only account for a small percentage of shooting deaths in the United States, gun violence still remains a very complex issue in American society. Gun violence in America occurs at an alarming rate even when compared to other countries with similar levels of gun ownership. Stephen Mennell's work on this topic shows that despite the prevalence of guns in Switzerland, France, Canada, Sweden and Austria, all of these countries have significantly lower homicide rates than the United States (Mennell 2007, p. 141). This implies that gun

ownership is not itself an adequate explanation as to why we see high levels of interpersonal violence in America.

It would be unwise to generalize all mass shootings that occur in the United States into one definitive explanation. Mass shootings occur for a variety of reasons, including social frustration, alienation, detachment and mental instability. Some are racially motivated, while others lack a racial component. Of course it is very difficult to pinpoint why someone would resort to such obscene violence. This means that in order to better understand mass shootings in America we need to refocus our attention away from the individual characteristics of the shooters and pay more attention to the socio-cultural contexts in which instrumental violence is produced.

Stephen Mennell points out that however nicely Elias's conception of "social-constraint towards self-constraint" may predict the decline in violence, the extensive webs of interdependence it creates do more to curb impulsive violence than instrumental violence (Mennell 2007, p. 127). In the same paragraph Mennell asks, "even if habitus changes in the direction of people's having a greater habitual capacity for controlling their aggressive and potentially violent impulses, why should the instrumentally rational use of violence decline?" Mass shootings are an example of instrumental rather than impulsive acts of violence. These acts are planned in advance and the shooter has a particular goal they wish to accomplish by engaging in this type of violence. Here we see a de-pacification of one's self-constraint to the point where mass violence seems to be an appropriate response to societal frustrations. This is of course counter to Elias's civilizing process which predicts a growing habitual repugnance towards the use of violence. Is it perhaps true that while, as Mennell points out, the central thrust of the civilizing process is towards a specific type of conscious formation, producing feelings of guilt and repugnance towards the pleasurable use of violence, increasing pressures towards competition, achievement and the demand for foresight actually facilitate the use of instrumental violence (Mennell 2007, p. 127)? I argue that these increasing pressures are brought about by the ethos of the free market and may in fact enable the instrumental use of violence as a purge of societal frustrations that manifest themselves in horrible violence. Elias and Scotson (1995) suggest that social exclusion and inclusion must be understood within the context of dynamic processes that occur over time. Therefore, those we consider outsiders are not excluded in an absolute sense. According to Elias and Scotson, in one way or another, outsiders still retain chains of interdependence with each other (Elias and Scotson

1995; Loyal and Quilley 2004). However likely, perhaps increasing pressures towards economic and social individualism have created a sense of alienation where one feels, even if only temporarily, detached from both established and outsider groups, thus eroding feelings of interdependency and conformity to the point where renouncing constraints against the use of violence becomes a very real possibility. Connected to America's free-market mentality is the hyper-masculinity that permeates American culture. Mass shootings in the United States are universally committed by men. According to Tristan Bridges and Tara Leigh (2015), men have historically benefited from a great deal of privilege—white, educated, middle- and upper-class, able-bodied, heterosexual men in particular. Recent social movements in the United States, including the legalization of gay marriage and Black Lives Matter, have challenged some of these privileges. Kimmel (2013) suggests that these changes have produced a uniquely American gendered sentiment that he calls "aggrieved entitlement". The inability of men to benefit from long-held privileges doesn't guarantee that someone will resort to mass shootings. However, from the cultural perspective of free-market individualism and hyper-masculinity, mass shootings can be understood as an extremely violent example of a larger issue concerning changes in relations between men and women and historical transformations in gender, race and class inequality.

Post-industrial society has had an overwhelming effect on interpersonal violence in America. This is especially true in urban America where increasing unemployment and an ineffective welfare system has left urban families socially and economically excluded from mainstream society. To understand how these developments have influenced violence in urban America I turn to Wacquant's (2011) study of the black ghettos of Chicago during the 1980s and 1990s. His study found evidence of a decivilizing process in which he observed a generational deterioration of emotional management and impulse control (Wacquant 2011, p. 153). In what he refers to as "social dedifferentiation", there exists a process marked by an erosion of vital social institutions (education, economic, industrial and religious). The erosion of these institutions results in the de-pacification of the lives of those who must face this reality on a daily basis. Conventional forms of employment and welfare structures have since been replaced by the informal economy, creating a space where both instrumental and impulsive violence can occur as a means to secure one's position in informal markets (Wacquant 2011, p. 156). Merton's (1938) theory of social strain can also be used in this context to explain how in such situations people

may resort to armed robbery as a way to obtain what they cannot obtain through legitimate channels. In this way, violence can be used instrumentally, to accomplish a goal. At the same time violence can be impulsive, facilitated by the uncertainty, increased sense of danger, and suspicion that marks the daily lives of those living in America's impoverished communities. Wacquant's study illustrates that the violence we see in urban America is therefore a byproduct of the de-pacification of emotions and impulses resulting from the exclusion of a large portion of the population from viable economic opportunities and the deterioration of the organizational fabric in a post-industrial society (Currie 1997). The distinctively political and economic roots of racial and class exclusion continue to define the cyclical violence that plagues America's urban communities, a situation made worse by the state's replacement of vital social institutions with aggressive methods of containment and pacification.

More particularly in America, the state apparatus has attempted to retrench itself in urban communities by responding to public discontent with aggressive and often violent police intervention. Minority communities in the United States share a disproportionate amount of state-facilitated violence as it is often disseminated through what Elias referred to as "authorized specialists of violence", those who are in the direct service of the state's monopoly of violence (Elias 1981, p. 8; Elias 2008). In the context of urban America these specialists belong to the local police force. In the past year, urban America has witnessed a series of homicides involving the police resulting in the deaths of unarmed blacks. When Michael Brown was shot dead by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014, it strengthened a movement that had begun with the previous killing of another black teenager, Trayvon Martin, who was shot in 2012 by neighbourhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman. Brown's death was not the first of its kind: just a month prior, Eric Garner died after being placed in a chokehold by NYPD officers for selling untaxed cigarettes. Other police-involved homicides of unarmed minorities included that of twelve-year-old Tamir Rice and twenty-two-year-old John Crawford. The most recent occurred on 4 April 2015 when North Charleston police officer Michael Slager shot unarmed Walter Scott. Michael Slager was caught on camera shooting Scott in the back and trying to plant a weapon next to Scott's body. Slager was later charged with first-degree murder as a result of the video evidence. One can only suspect what the end result of the investigation would have been if the video evidence had not been available.

The disturbing use of force by American law enforcement in minority communities can be understood in the context of America's confidence in the existence of a universal human nature. Mennell's discussion of "fugitive government" depicts a "taken-for-granted" American habitus in which strong and stable habitual self-constraint stands almost alone in the steering of conduct, requiring little support from the forces of constraint by other people (Mennell 2007, p. 29). During the American Enlightenment, Thomas Jefferson, a slave owner, believed that all people can be governed and govern themselves using reason, asserting that people are inherently endowed with rationality, rights and a sense of justice. Elias would later refute this argument and go on to describe rationality and reason as qualities of human nature that are not fixed, but rather result from a gradual change in prevailing social standards and emotional management (Elias 2000, p. 158). According to Mennell the immediate consequence of Jefferson's idea of a universal human nature resulted in dominant white groups taking internal pacification in America for granted (Mennell 2007, p. 30; Mennell 2009). In other words, they believed that freely interacting individuals would create a natural harmony of interests guided by a veiled and internalized discipline, similar to that of Adam Smith's conception of the free market. This line of thought continues to resonate in the social and political life of Americans today and has contributed tremendously to the state's neglect of impoverished communities across America. A naturally occurring harmony of interests cannot exist when a large portion of the American population is excluded from mainstream society and the economy. The systematic breakdown of poor communities devastated by mass unemployment, economic abandonment and the state's unjust use of its monopoly of violence on unarmed citizens has accumulated over generations into overt public dissatisfaction and anger. The state's response to public discontent is often characterized by more threats of violence, including heightened police presence at protests, the use of surplus military technology and the frequent summoning of the National Guard—a tactic that has inadequately addressed the root causes of interpersonal violence and the fractured trust between the state and the governed.

4 The Violence Paradox

I have described both the international and domestic paradigms of American violence in their own light. To understand the paradoxical nature of these paradigms of violence it is necessary to review the decivilizing qualities

of each and how they relate to one another. This will involve comparing both paradigms and confronting the consequences that have resulted from their implementation. Both paradigms of violence that I have discussed reflect America's attempt to maintain a two-front monopoly of violence, a task that has resulted in de-democratization, social disintegration, reduced foresight and the breakdown of mutual identity both domestically and abroad.

When comparing the two paradigms of American violence one can see very obvious signs of de-democratization. Mennell (2007) argues that processes of functional democratization are also accompanied by movements in the opposite direction, towards diminishing mutual identity (Mennell 2007, pp. 311–314). For instance, economic and social inequalities are vastly increasing in urban America. The de-pacification of emotions and impulses resulting from the exclusion of a large portion of the population from viable economic opportunities in a post-industrial society has created a space for both impulsive and instrumental violence to flourish. The increasing pressures associated with American expectations of competition, achievement and free-market individualism have alienated a generation, creating instabilities within behaviour structures. These instabilities brought about by social marginalization may in fact help explain the interpersonal violence occurring in the United States. As Mennell put it, the disparity between perception and reality is the "curse of the American Dream" (Mennell 2007, pp. 249–265).

In America, the state has the upper hand when it comes to its ability to carry out violence. Therefore it still retains an effective monopoly of violence, but an increasingly delegitimized monopoly in the eyes of the socially marginalized. Its effectiveness has a lot to do with the state's access to the latest socio-technological progressions of violence, often adopting similar gear and tactics to those of the military. For Elias, the crucial point is the balance between the two functions of the monopoly of violence—the function for its controllers and the function for the members of the state-regulated society—and thus, the degree of internal pacification (Elias 1981, p. 5). When the power balance shifts too much in the favour of one group, the subordinated group will attempt to regain some sense of its lost power. In America, the monopoly of violence that is meant to pacify violence has in fact increased tensions between the state and its citizens. This has contributed to the de-democratization of America's urban centres where fewer reciprocal controls are disseminated between fewer and fewer groups. According to Rachel Cleves, since the 1960s minority communities have

experienced not the increasing investment of the state, but its withdrawal (Cleves 2011, p. 118). The state has certainly withdrawn its economic support from urban minority communities but it has retrenched itself in other ways. The state has positioned itself as a containment force willing to use violence to secure pacified spaces and yet has contributed significantly to the de-pacification of the lives of those who reside in poor minority communities. The precarious violence performed by the state against its own citizens and the violent posturing of the state in response to public discontent has called to attention the importance of recognizing the connection between unjust state violence and the de-legitimation of the state's monopoly of violence. The result is an erosion of functional democratization, interdependencies, and mutual identity which has only been made worse by the state's policies of economic abandonment and mass incarceration.

Abroad we can see how American military intervention has contributed to a new era of instability in the Middle East. The events of 11 September 2001 were meant to humiliate the United States, kicking off a nearly two decades-long campaign of rage. America left Iraq in 2011 with the myth that it had strengthened circles of mutual identity and brought democracy to the people of Iraq. Now, we are witnessing a new insurgency by a more determined and ruthless radical group threatening to undo the little progress that was made in Iraq. As America prepares itself for a major withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, we eagerly wait to see if Afghanistan will become another Iraq. Even as America wraps up combat operations in Afghanistan we still see examples of its instability with a recent suicide bombing near a former CIA outpost that killed 30 people (*BBC* 2015). This is a sobering reminder that America's fifteen-year investment in Afghanistan could unravel in the same fashion as Iraq. The issue is that America will likely face further humiliation in the coming years, as it continues to embrace a "minority of the best" self-image and an aggressive "stand your ground" foreign policy.

The decivilizing qualities of both paradigms of violence are exactly what make them paradoxical. The intention of the international paradigm was to create webs of interdependencies and mutual identities that reflect the values of American democracy. This was supposed to translate into an increased sense of foresight and predictability as a means to safeguard America from future terror attacks. Despite America's efforts, massive de-democratization has taken place in Iraq and elsewhere with the rise of new insurgencies. The campaign against terror was meant to protect American citizens from violent threats and yet the interpersonal and state violence

transpiring in America today has taken more lives and has done more to divide Americans than any foreign terror group. While America continues in its attempt to establish monopolies of violence in other countries, it has failed to account for the violence occurring at home. America has become obsessively fixated on securing monopolies of violence both domestically and internationally to the point where it sees no other way to bring about cooperation and solidarity among groups. These progressions have led the United States down a path where it is willing to engage in mass violence abroad in the name of safeguarding Americans while remaining willfully apathetic to the conditions that have contributed to the interpersonal and state violence occurring within its own borders.

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PART III

Post-Conflict Processes and Democracy

CHAPTER 8

Norbert Elias and State Building After Violent Conflict

Gëzim Visoka

1 Introduction

This chapter explores the complementarity between Norbert Elias's figurational sociology of violence and post-conflict state-building studies. Sociology has played a formative role in peace and conflict studies. However, Elias's figurational sociology has been entirely ignored in state-building debates. While state formation signifies violent struggles between domestic groups to create new sovereign political communities, state building focuses on external efforts of building state institutions and restructuring securities after violent conflicts (Richmond 2014). Andrew Linklater has recently used Elias's work as a lens through which to examine global civilizing processes; however, he has not delved further to explore how Elias's sociology might relate to international interventions after violent conflicts (2011, p. 61). On the other hand, figurational sociologists have dealt with the question of violence on different epistemological levels, though not in the context of contemporary conflicts and external state-building efforts (Fletcher 1997; Mennell 1992; Maleševi ć and Ryan 2012).

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Despite this epistemic disregard, Elias's theory of state formation and civilizing processes resonates with the contemporary state-building practices undertaken by the United Nations and other regional organizations. Tatiana S. Landini has rightly argued that Elias's figurational sociology "can be applied to topics and countries or regions never studied by Elias", as it provides "interesting instruments to look at the social world and improve our understanding of it" (Landini 2013, p. 27). This chapter argues that Elias's figurational sociology is relevant to contemporary state-building studies, providing a useful framework for examining state-building efforts from the prism of civilizing processes and monopolization of violence, as well as for an exploration of the unintended consequences and peace-breaking effects of international interventions. The chapter first draws parallels between Elias's perspective on violence and civilizing processes, and contemporary violent conflicts. It highlights that the current figuration of global peace consists of a multitude of civilizing and decivilizing processes, where international interventions and state building can be considered as a global attempt to govern internal conflicts as well as an assemblage of blueprints for civilizing conflict-affected societies.

The second part of this chapter explores how Elias's ideas on violence, civilizing processes and state formation correspond to contemporary state-building interventions, which are rooted in the Eurocentric and Weberian notion of state building. Contemporary state-building efforts seek to prevent the recurrence of violence and solidify peace in conflict-affected societies by reconstructing state institutions and re-establishing order and law through the imposition of norms and rules originating from liberal democracies. It is a structural solution aiming to transform social practices from inter-group hostility to peaceful co-existence. While in Elias's work the monopolization of the use of violence takes place in a long societal struggle and individual transformation, in the context of state building the monopolization of the use of force is enforced from outside by the UN or other intervening organizations with the aim initially of divesting local power-holders of their authority, and then gradually transferring it back through a supposedly democratic process. Through state-building interventions, the international community seeks to reshuffle power after violent conflict and to sideline 'peace spoilers' by means of security sector reform, the promotion of power-sharing institutions and political moderation (Paris 2004). The engineering of self-restrained citizens takes place through the promotion of human rights and civil society, combining rights-based regimes and neo-liberal economic dependency, which aim to break

away from conflict-prone practices and instead promote individualism and self-discipline. For this reason, international state building is a significant example of the shift away from external constraints and the movement towards collective and individual self-restraint in post-conflict societies.

Elias's figurational sociology is equally relevant in the examination of the unintended consequences of state-building interventions. Elias considers that the fabric of society is constituted of unplanned outcomes of individual actions. Applying this perspective, it can be noted that conflict-affected societies are overwhelmingly dominated by unintended consequences produced by multiple international and local actors as part of the state-building process. This chapter examines how state-building interventions have unintentionally contributed to 'peace-breaking' and 'state-weakening' dynamics (Visoka 2016b). The chapter illustrates how democratization and ethnic power-sharing institutions have undermined the emergence of a progressive social contract and active citizenry. Instead, different forms of local resistance and disobedience to international and local authority have emerged that have profoundly shaped peace. Similar dynamics have emerged in the context of security sector reform, human rights promotion, civil society development, and economic reconstruction. While Elias (1994b, 2006) remains optimistic about human ability and commitment to the mitigation of such unintended consequences through rational and strategic thinking, evidence in state-building studies shows that post-conflict reality is shaped by unlearning and the denial of failures. Unintended consequences of state building have led to new mutations of structural violence, evident in social and ethnic inequality, authoritarian rule disguised as democratic conduct, and external injustices and conditionality. The chapter concludes with a number of observations on the suitability of Elias's figurational sociology for overcoming paradigmatic divisions within state-building studies, generating a post-critical sociology of peace, and rethinking the process of pacification and the rejuvenation of social contract in conflict societies. The chapter represents one of the first attempts to align the work of Elias with existing debates in peace and conflict studies.

2 Norbert Elias and Contemporary Violent Conflicts

Violence is one of the key concepts of Elias's figurational sociology. Elias's civilizing process is directly linked to the control and reduction of individual, political, inter-group and inter-state violence. As Jonathan Fletcher

argues, Elias's civilizing processes are based on two premises: "the importance of centralised power in the form of government (the state), and lengthening chains of interdependencies in pacification processes" (1997, p. 38). Elias's thinking on violence is rooted in a negative ontology of peace, as he conceives it to be "an inherent feature of human social life with which humans must learn to cope" and considers some degree of force as necessary to control existing violence (Fletcher 1997, p. 52). Centralization and monopolization of the use of violence, as well as the public distribution of benefits, have played a role in reducing violence and in forming permanent institutions or what he refers to as a "democratic regime", which is a "very specific social structure at a very advanced state of monopoly formation" (Elias 1994a, pp. 275–276). However, civilizing processes not only focus on the monopolization of the use of violence by the state, but also involve the civilization and pacification of individuals through social and individual measures.

Elias's sociology offers useful insights for explaining contemporary conflicts and the normative maturity of global governance, and accounting for the decentralized world order. In *The Society of Individuals,* Elias speaks about the trends of global integration, which signify the shift of power from state to global institutions, including here transferring models of self-control. In this context, Elias discusses briefly the emergence of the United Nations (UN) as a global institution, which he regards as "weak and in many ways ineffective" (1991, p. 227). However, he treats the UN as an imperfect global institution that constitutes a "learning process" (1991, p. 167). According to Elias, institutions move in unplanned directions, often shaped by "bitter experience", and it can take "several centuries before they are somewhat effective" (Elias 1991, pp. 167, 227). Despite this, Elias considers the UN as playing an important role in the "emergence of a new global sense of responsibility for the fate of individuals in distress", such as the global care for human rights, the protection of civilians in conflicts and the development of a global civil society (Elias 1991, p. 168). Nevertheless, he argues that, "like other social processes, global integration can certainly be reversed, and it could happen quite suddenly" (Elias 1991, p. 164). Building on this premise, Linklater argues that Elias's sociology "contains invaluable resources … for a comparative investigation of global civilizing processes" (2011, p. 17). Elias is in favour of a rule-based society, arguing that "no decent and enjoyable coexistence of human beings is possible without everybody's submission to rules" (Elias 1987, p. 76). Linklater argues that Elias's civilizing process resonates with

liberalist ideas of security communities and "inter-liberal peace", while his perspective on decivilizing processes is more related to realist pessimism of human and inter-state ethical conduct (2011, p. 21).

Close to global civilizing processes is the democratic peace theory, which considers that liberal democracies do not go to war with one another due to their shared political values and economic interdependencies (Kier and Krebs 2010). What we are witnessing in global affairs today are simultaneous civilizing and decivilizing processes. Examples of civilizing processes include the development of global solidarity and ethics of care, human rights protection, humanitarian assistance and the protection of civilians in armed conflicts (Linklater 2011, p. 255). Taking an Eliasian perspective, Linklater raises important questions about the possibility of progress in world politics, whereby sovereign states "voluntarily accept the levels of self-restraint that are critical for building world peace" or "must await the appearance of a global monopoly of power that can enforce constraints that societies are unwilling to impose on themselves, with all the dangers that transformation will involve" (2011, p. 18). The idea behind international humanitarian and human rights law is to develop a rule-based international order, which can resolve inter-state issues through dialogue and predictable processes, thereby avoiding confrontation and the use of force to achieve political goals.

However, global civilizing processes are far from changing attitudes towards violence, far from monopolizing (and controlling) the use of violence, far from developing self-restraining political collectivities, and far from breaking ethno-nationalist identity and insider-outsider dualisms (Linklater 2011, p. 263). Reversing Elias's conditions of civilizing processes, Fletcher defines decivilizing processes as the "breakdown in the monopoly of violence and a disintegration of interdependency chains" (1997, pp. 84–85). An examination of civil wars and inter-state conflicts indicates that although the lowest number of conflicts after the Cold War in a single year has been 31, recently this trend has moved upward, with 40 armed conflicts recorded in 2014 (Pettersson and Wallensteen 2014, p. 536). This trend is linked to the emergence of ethnic conflict and "new wars", where ethnic identity and historical hatred are motives for deploying unconstrained yet organized violence, mainly against civilian populations. The ethnic conflicts that resulted in genocidal acts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda are significant examples of decivilizing processes and unethical warfare (Bell-Fialkoff 1999, pp. 54–57). A UN report states in 2013 that "civilians continue to account for the vast majority of

casualties in current conflicts" (United Nations Security Council 2013, p. 2). Stefan Wolff argues that ethnic conflicts targeting innocent civilians are the "product of deliberate choices of people to pursue certain goals with violent means" (2006, p. 6). These identity-based conflicts correspond directly to Elias's dichotomy of "the established" and "the outsider", both of which "consolidate their power through group cohesion, internal group control, collective identity, group charisma", that result in unequal relations within groups, stigmatization of outsiders, and establishment of emotional barriers (Fletcher 1997, pp. 71–75).

Decivilizing practices are also evident among the "civilized" nations, who have launched a war on terror through counter-insurgency that has exceeded the established ethics of warfare as well as the inhuman treatment of detainees and prisoners, including illegal and secret detention programmes and facilities. The inadequate treatment of refugees and the most vulnerable subjects in Europe has raised questions about the civilizational maturity of European nations. The liberal way of war can have two outcomes: "an endless war or the transformation of the other societies and cultures into liberal societies and cultures" (Dillon and Reid 2009). Democracies might not go to war with one another, but they have never stopped fighting non-democratic countries. These acts of organized and collective violence illustrate that perhaps there has never been a civilizing global order when considering the existing acts of brutality as "decivilizing" behaviours. Siniša Malešević and Kevin Ryan (2012) criticize Elias's figurational sociology for conceiving civilization processes in a linear track and failing to account for the recurrence of organized violence and proliferation of warfare in the contemporary era. However, Elias has never ruled out the human potentiality for decivilized conduct; echoing this, Fletcher postulates "the likelihood that conflict and violence will remain for human beings an integral component of their unending and constantly endangered process of civilization" (1997, p. 184). Wolff also agrees that ethnic conflicts as decivilizing processes "are likely to stay with us for some time, but understanding their causes, consequences, and dynamics can equip us to deal with them earlier and more effectively in the future" (Wolff 2006, p. 5).

In the midst of these never-ending conflicts, the UN has tried to develop a broad variety of mechanisms to respond to threats to international peace and security, ranging from preventive diplomacy, sanctions and developmental assistance to peace making, peacekeeping and peace building. In an attempt to regulate the use of violence in civil wars and inter-state

conflicts, the international community has launched military interventions under humanitarian pretexts, and has laid the normative foundations for the Responsibility to Protect doctrine (Newman and DeRouen 2014). As part of the sociology of global civilizing processes an important aspect that stands out is the role of international interventions in pacifying conflict-affected societies through state-building efforts. Elias's figurational sociology could be useful for the study of figurations and disfigurations of peace after violent conflicts, as well as for exploring the prospects of developing self-restrained societies through international intervention. In this regard, international state building provides an important research area to examine the extent to which the UN has succeeded in mitigating violence caused by inter-state and intra-state conflicts and in developing a worldwide ethos of peace and self-control.

3 International State Building as an External Civilizing Process

The international response to most of the violent conflicts that have occurred during the past two decades has been a combination of state-building and peace-building interventions. While the establishment of self-sustaining, legitimate and effective state institutions is an end goal of state building, peace building is primarily concerned with eradicating structural factors that trigger violence in the first place (Richmond 2014). Elias's account of state formation and civilizing processes has some features in common with present state-building practices. Elias attributes the reduction of violence within societies as interdependent human figurations to the monopolization of the legitimate use of violence (Elias 1994a, p. 275). He argues that "when a monopoly of force is formed, pacified social spaces are created which are normally free from acts of violence" (Elias 1994a, p. 369). Elias's idea of state formation through the monopolization of violence is similar to victor's peace, which in the context of state building, signifies international interventions "developed with a minimum of local consent, by external actors, intent on establishing new modes of governance in order to create a sustainable and recognisably liberal peace in their eyes" (Richmond 2005, p. 167). To enforce peace and rebuild state capacity, UN and regional organizations have launched peace operations that have performed a wider range of tasks, including: restoring security; monopolizing and regulating the use of violence; strengthening the rule of law; supporting democratic processes; promoting human rights;

building new state institutions; delivering humanitarian assistance and supporting economic recovery; building civil society; and promoting reconciliation. Some of the most well-known societies that have been subject to external state-building interventions include Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, Iraq, Nepal, the Solomon Islands, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi and South Sudan.

The pretext for external intervention is often rooted in the collective interest in preserving international security and peace, and the humanist motivation to alleviate societies from violent conflict. Often pacifying and civilizing interventions take place in those societies where the state has failed to peacefully resolve disputes and has breached international humanitarian and human rights law, including the indiscriminate murdering of unarmed civilians (Rotberg 2004). Elias demonstrates that it can take a long time for the monopolization of the use of force and state formation, as well as the civilizing processes, to become rooted in a particular habitus and to condition individual behaviour (Elias 1994a, p. 275). Contrary to this, contemporary state-building interventions impose a social contract, hoping to produce immediate pacifying results. International interventions aim to build "civilized societies" that mirror supposed Western democratic societies. As Roland Paris argues:

> international peacebuilders have promulgated a particular vision of how states should organise themselves internally, based on the principles of liberal democracy and market-oriented economics, [which] may be viewed as a modern rendering of the *mission civilisatrice*—the colonial-era belief that the European imperial powers had a duty to "civilise" their overseas possessions. (2002, pp. 637–638)

The liberal regime of norms, practices and values are imposed on "uncivilised" conflict-shattered societies to initiate a socializing process with new political and societal order that aims to maintain stability, peace and development, and prevent the recurrence of violence. This liberal interventionism seeks to regulate, control, reform and dictate the transformation of "uncivil societies", so that abnormal pathologies are cured and fail to spread over other neighbouring regions. As Vivian Jabri argues, state building "aims to shape societies so that they become self-governing entities within distinctly liberal lines" (Jabri 2010, p. 48). External interventions impose blueprints and norms on post-conflict societies for developing institutions, laws and practices that will control violence through international

peacekeeping; for pacifying ethnic and socio-political figuration through state building; and for internalizing self-constraints and achieving reconciliation through peace building. This international political engineering aims to pass on the exercise of monopoly of power to new state institutions in the area of governance, policing, the judiciary and the military.

International interventions first and foremost invest in building state institutions as the most sustainable approach for "civilising" post-conflict societies. In the majority of cases, building a Weberian state is the preference of the international community. As Nicolas Lemay-Hébert, Nicolas Onuf and Vojin Rakić argue, "the modern Western state is employed as the norm against which all other states are judged, effectively stripping the state from its cultural moorings" (2013, pp. 3–4). The core idea is to reproduce Westphalian sovereign states capable of governing their subjects through functioning institutions that respect human rights, which are considered as European standards of civilization (Zaum 2007, p. 236). According to Elias, centrally organized institutions acting as impartial monopolies "oriented on the overall network of interdependencies" play an important role in driving the civilizing process and societal pacification (1994a, p. 276). In the same vein, contemporary state-building operations seek to consolidate state institutions capable of exercising the legitimate monopoly of violence and to remove informal and competing structures. State building has become a strategy for tackling the transnational impact of "fragile", "weak" or "failed" states (Rotberg 2004). Francis Fukuyama argues that the "lack of state capacity in poor countries has come to haunt the developed world much more directly" (2004b, p. 18). He considers the administrative capacity of states to govern democratically as key to effective state- building (Fukuyama 2004a). Similarly, Ashraf Ghani and Claire Lockhart argue that "dysfunctional states are the breeding grounds of networks of criminality and terror" (Ghani and Lockhart 2008, p. 222), signifying that state building is as much as about promulgating civilized conduct as mitigating external risks.

Establishing the rule of law has taken a central role in international interventions because it is perceived that "when rule of law takes hold, it creates a reinforcing loop of stability, predictability, trust, and empowerment" (Ghani and Lockhart 2008, p. 126). Aligned with Elias's discussion of the monopoly and centralized control of violence, violence after conflict should be controlled through law-enforcement mechanisms; this entails resolving individual and social tensions through codified laws implemented by independent judicial institutions and enforced by police structures.

The constitutive role of the rule of law consists of generating peace and stability through the promotion of strong judiciary institutions; the development of democratic institutions that promote human rights; the enhancement of democratic participation; the support of economic development by creating appropriate conditions for foreign investments; and the promotion of the notion of justice in society whereby everyone is treated equally according to the law (Bull 2008, pp. 48–49).

In order to reduce violence after conflict, it is deemed necessary to reform the security sector, which entails restructuring the police sector, establishing new defence forces, reforming the intelligence sector, and training border and prison guards (Rubin 2008). The primary role of these security forces is to enforce the monopolization of violence and to protect new state institutions. Part of security sector reform involves the disarmament, demilitarization and reintegration of former combatants, which is seen as critical to ensure that the new security apparatus is under civilian control and respects human rights (United Nations Security Council 2000, p. 8). For example, international interventions in Sierra Leone and Liberia have focused efforts on the transformation of warring groups into peaceful subjects to ensure the formation of a democratic security system under civilian oversight. In Elias's civilizing processes, violent conduct is sanctioned by the allocation of guilt and punishment, an important mechanism for maintaining social order (Fletcher 1997, p. 49). In the former Yugoslav space, part of the peace-building processes has also involved the allocation of individual responsibility for war crimes through international and domestic transitional justice mechanisms (Visoka 2016a). Such transitional justice processes have focused on prosecuting senior political and military officials on all sides of the conflict and ensuring that new political and military elites learn self-constraint and resolve disputes peacefully (United Nations Security Council 2004).

For Elias, self-constrained citizens are considered crucial to civilizing processes and the reduction of violent conduct. Central to civilizational change is the role of shame and embarrassment in changing individual and societal behaviours, which does have the unintended effect of creating what Elias calls a "controlling agency forming itself in society at large" (Elias 1994a, p. 373). One of Elias's criteria of civilizing processes is the "shift in the balance between constraints by others and self-constraint involving the taming, differentiation and increasing complexity of external control" (1994a, p. 82). Civil society is perceived as the most suitable agent for establishing a civil peace after violent conflict (Richmond 2005).

International state building seeks societal and individual change in post-conflict societies through supporting local civil society groups who might serve as generators of social capital, important partners for democratic governance, and legitimizers of liberal interventionism.

Donor organizations have mainly supported civil society groups in engaging in inter-ethnic dialogue, building networks of trust and promoting reconciliation. For example, one of the key motives underlying the World Bank's (2006, p. 3) investment in civil society is the formation and practice of peaceful, democratic attitudes and values among citizens, including tolerance, mutual trust and non-violent conflict resolution. Similarly, Larry Diamond argues that in addition to checking and limiting the power of the state, civil society "develops a democratic culture of tolerance" (Diamond 1999, p. xxiii). However, in state-building literature, external pacification efforts have a negative connotation. Diana Francis argues that pacification is "understood in terms of hegemonic stability, hierarchically managed, which in the first place meets the economic and political interests of those who control it", whereby conflict "must be kept down or extinguished through the monopoly of violence" (Francis 2010, p. 76). Contrary to these dynamics, Elias's view on individual self-control and pacification represents a more realistic view of localized state-formation dynamics not necessarily influenced by external forces.

Despite the promise of international state building to alleviate violence after conflict, its top-down and imposing nature has been problematic. When it comes to the question of how to achieve civilizational progress, Elias seems to support indigenous processes of self-restraint "without any extraneous restraint in observing the common rules they have worked out in the course of generations as regulators of their lives" (Elias 1987, p. 76). External interventions have produced numerous unintended consequences, which have encouraged "peace-breaking" dynamics in post-conflict societies (Visoka 2016b). As Linklater explains, "decivilising trends can be released … by fears and anxieties about the social and political effects of encroaching external influences" (Linklater 2011, p. 20). As a result of imposed state building, different forms of local resistance have emerged in post-conflict societies such as Kosovo, expressed through a disregard for international authority and local institutions, as well as through a refusal to pay taxes, participate in elections and share the common burden (Visoka 2012). While resistance has the potential to revitalize social contract in post-conflict societies, it can also reproduce new exclusionary practices that risk affecting the subaltern and vulnerable communities

(Visoka 2011). Joint commitments to the state and fellow citizens, which would promote justice, fairness and equality without removing the space for agential articulation, resistance, disagreement and disobedience, have more potential to generate political obligations in conflict-affected societies. Elias argues that changes in individual emotional responses to violence and the acceptance of the monopolization of power have altered social relations, expanded the web of interdependence, and increased "pressures towards greater consideration of the consequences of one's own actions for other people" (Mennell and Goudsblom 1998, p. 18).

This view resonates with Elias's support for a strong state authority and obedient citizenry, positioning resistance to the monopolization of power and decentralized societies as counter-productive to the aspiration for a peaceful society (Smith 2001, p. 62). The analysis has thus far explored the similarities and differences between Elias's view of civilizing processes and state formation and contemporary international state building and liberal interventionism. However, the process of social self-control and civilization tends not to unfold as expected and desired. It is the unpredictable nature of social reality that underlines an important aspect of Elias's figurational sociology, and this is discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

4 Figurational Sociology and the Unintended Consequences of State Building

While Elias's civilizing process bears similarities to contemporary state-building theories and practices, there are other aspects of figurational sociology that could prove useful in examining the long-term unintended consequences of stateb building. Elias considers that the primary focus of sociological studies should be "the relationship between intentional, goal-directed human activities and the unplanned or unconscious process of interweaving with other such activities, past and present, and their consequences" (Smith 2001, p. 1). Elias maintains that intentional actions of human interactions most often lead to unplanned and unintended outcomes (Mennell 1992, p. 258). His perspective on unintended consequences can be useful for understanding the long-term impact of post-conflict state building. Chiyuki Aoi, Cedric de Coning and Ramesh Thakur define unintended consequences in state-building contexts as "acts that were not intended when these mandates were adopted or when they were executed" (2007b, p. 6). Policy makers invoke the discourse of unintended consequences to avoid responsibility for outcomes, while critical

voices consider unintended consequences as a testimony of failed state building. Despite the fact that contemporary state-building interventions have been "more charitable and consensual than the behaviour of many colonial powers" (Paris 2002, p. 653), they have produced unintended consequences, some of which have impeded the peace-building process and triggered peace-breaking dynamics.

As part of the state-building process, foreign interveners seek to develop power-sharing institutions to secure local compliance, encourage cooperation among former foes, and reduce destructive behaviour that challenges the efforts to monopolize the use of physical power. As Christoph Zurcher et al. argue, "when external actors help draft the constitution of a state that is emerging from war, they will have an enduring influence on its legal and institutional foundation" (Zurcher et al. 2013, p. 62). In post-conflict societies such as Kosovo and Timor-Leste, the inclusion of ex-combatants and the transformation of warring factions into modern political parties has led to multiple unplanned consequences, such as: discouraging multi-ethnic party structures; restricting citizen participation; increasing government inefficiency; and deepening dependency on external assistance (see Visoka 2017). Oliver Richmond argues that democratization processes as a standard form of conflict-avoidance policy have resulted in the emergence of elite predation, corruption and the promotion of nationalism (Richmond 2010, p. 691). While power sharing and ethnic accommodation can mitigate violent conduct, it results neither in the monopolization and centralization of power, nor in the pacification of individual behaviour (Roeder and Rothchild 2005). Instead, it is more likely to entrench established–outsider relations and permit the circulation of power among small ethnic elite at the expense of more democratic processes.

Contrary to the intention of monopolizing legitimate state authority, international interventions have dispersed power across different discorded centres (see Paris 2004). The presence of multiple sources of authority in post-conflict societies, such as UN peacekeepers and civilian administrators, as well as newly elected institutions and other shadow structures, has created social confusion regarding whom to obey and from whom to ask for protection and services. For example, in Liberia the weak performance of law-enforcement and judiciary bodies in resolving inter-personal disputes has resulted in the infringement of the human rights of citizens and the actualizing of informal governance. The exclusion of citizens from decision-making processes and the persistence of poverty have reduced the ability of citizens to become politically engaged. Consequently,

the absence of popular consensus in the development of the new social contract, and the one-sidedness of political obligations (whereby the state demands citizen compliance without recognizing rights and fulfilling needs in practice), have led to fragile state–society relations.

Re-establishing the rule of law has been one of the key aspects of state building in the majority of post-conflict societies. New legal frameworks are imposed on conflict-affected societies, which are based on the Western models of the rule-of-law system. However, no matter how liberal and pro-peace such legal blueprints might be, in societies such as Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands, they were considered foreign to the local community. Such frameworks can fail to be implemented once the external intervention ends and the international community turns its attention elsewhere (Farrall 2009, p. 156). Richmond (2011) argues that by focusing on institutions and security, peace-building interventions have ignored local context, culture, custom, needs and welfare. State-building interventions have tried to develop a citizenry dependent on the neoliberal economy without welfare protectionism. During the transition, the inability of external actors to provide equal justice to all groups and their ignorance of serious criminality and corruption has engendered distrust within the local population in the rule-of-law institutions. This is manifested through communal violence, a return to informality and alternative dispute-resolution customs, as well as a disregard for political obligation, including taxation.

State-building interventions have prioritized the development of civil society as a way of improving the chances of success after violent conflict through widening local participation, improving socio-economic conditions, and promoting human rights and civic values. However, civil society organizations in post-conflict societies like Bosnia and Herzegovina are often built upon ascribed criteria, such as ethnic belonging, religion and social status. Such exclusionary practices often reinforce divisions between groups (Fowler 1997). David Chandler argues that "the unintended consequence of creating civil society NGOs which are reliant on external support has been that they are never forced to build their own base of popular support" (2000, p. 151). Under these conditions, the international community unintentionally reproduces the established–outsider relations and contributes to the recurrence of new forms of conflict and latent violence. The donor community focuses its support on a small number of NGOs who are better equipped to attract external funds but suffer from low-level membership and weak ties with the community (World Bank 2006,

p. 1). This creates a transactional relationship between foreign donors and national NGOs who view peace work in terms of income generation and resourceful business (Visoka 2015).

Finally, the economic reconstruction that has taken place as part of the state-building interventions in countries such as Kosovo, Timor-Leste and Iraq, has focused on physical reconstruction and structural adjustment in order to stabilize the economy and ensure basic economic activity. Taxation regimes are established aiming to strengthen state institutions and finance public services (Fjeldstad et al. 2008). However, Michael Pugh (2010) has argued that neo-liberal policies of self-reliance welfare, together with the marketization and privatization of socially owned enterprises, result in a number of unintended exacerbations. These include the expansion of the class of uninsured "bare lives"; the encouragement of informal economic activity; and the provision of selective services to a small number of communities based on their sphere of influence, ignoring the entire remaining population due to lack of capacity, mandate or incentives (Pugh 2010, p. 268). Mary Anderson (1999) has illustrated how aid can unintentionally exacerbate conflict by preferring recipients from one side of the conflict, and by failing to prevent the theft of aid goods by warring factions.

As state-building interventions often fail to reach their intended goals, it is important to question the extent to which unintended consequences steer peace-building processes in unwanted directions after violent conflicts. Elias believes that people have the potential to increase their capacity to exercise control in a rational and reasonable way by generating knowledge about the social processes and figurations that shape their social existence (Elias 2006, p. 142; 1994b). That said, this does not contradict Elias's realist view on the possibility of decivilizational processes and setbacks in human self-control. In a similar vein, supporters of state building argue that we can "enhance our capacity to prevent, contain and manage potentially negative unintended consequences by improving our understanding of how they come about and by exploring ways in which we can improve our ability to anticipate and counter them" (Aoi et al. 2007, p. 268). Supporters of state building often identify the lack of planning, coordination, sufficient resources and multilateral commitment to transforming promises to practices, as well as insufficient understanding of local context, as being the main sources of unintended consequences. The improvement of these weaknesses is considered a potential solution for containing, managing, and reducing unintended consequences.

On the other hand, critical scholars, such as Richmond (2008, p. 462), recognize that unintended consequences constitute a never-ending process occurring in any type of knowledge of power. He suggests adopting bottom-up social ontologies in order to understand local context, and engaging with difference and the hybridity of social practices. According to Hannah Arendt, "consequences are boundless, because action … acts into a medium where every reaction becomes a chain reaction and where every process is the cause of new processes" (Arendt 1998, p. 190). However, Chandler (2014, p. 453) maintains that the "unknowability of the outcomes of our action does not remove our ethical responsibility for our actions, it, in fact, heightens our responsibility for these second-order consequences or side effects". Furthermore, it seems that contemporary state-building interventions are more guided by unlearning as there is constant repetition of learned mistakes in their conduct.

5 The Importance of Elias for Peace and Conflict Studies

This chapter has thus far situated Elias's work on violence in the context of current international violent conflicts, has highlighted similarities and differences between state-building and civilizing processes, and has explored some of the unintended consequences of state building from the perspective of figurational sociology. By way of conclusion, it is important to highlight some broader aspects of Elias's figurational sociology that could be beneficial for state-building studies. One of the major paradigmatic tensions in state-building debates is between scholars supporting problem-solving and policy-relevant knowledge, and those supporting emancipatory and critical knowledge. Liberal-interventionists focus on exploring state-building successes, while critical scholars explicitly look for state-building failures (Visoka 2016b). In general, supporters of liberal peace are motivated to assess the impact of liberal state building and suggest ways of improving its performance. On the other hand, critical approaches are committed to highlighting the weaknesses of state building after violent conflicts. Liberal-interventionists focus on structural aspects of state building, while critical approaches privilege local agency. This paradigmatic division has led to a lacuna in the discussion, and the intermingling factors, processes, events and agencies that shape peace prospects in the long run warrant examination.

Figurational sociology is capable of overcoming paradigmatic divisions between alternative theories (Dunning and Hughes 2013). Elias's sociology provides a suitable and complementary approach known as "detour via detachment" (relative detachment), which enables the generation of reality-congruent knowledge away from abstract or deeply ideological knowledge. His sociology "bypassed the epistemological tensions between the sociologies of action and social structures" (Quilley and Loyal 2004, p. 3). For instance, Nicos Mouzelis argues that Elias's concept of figuration "refers to agents (individual or collective) and their conflictual or co-operative interdependencies (structure)" (Mouzelis 1995, p. 73). Accordingly, Elias's figurational sociology can be useful for overcoming the paradigmatic tension between liberal-interventionist and critical perspectives on state building by exploring the complex figuration of peace after international intervention. Such a bridging endeavour would entail a post-critical epistemology of peace that is grounded on empirical knowledge and prone to generating humanistic knowledge that mitigates destructive social entanglements, such as mass killings, war and ethnonationalist violence (see Kilminster 2011, p. 96; Alker 1996).

Furthermore, Elias was "against any form of normative, teleological, and metaphysical interpretation of historical development and social life" (Tsekeris 2013, p. 88), favouring an interpretation where the relationality and contingency of social formation, such as identity, power and institutions are explored. A relational view of the peace-building process is essential in order to highlight that the identity of foreign interveners and local actors is not static, but determined by the social functions they perform and their relation to a place. Such a view would provide a more reality-congruent understanding of the official and marginal agencies shaping peace after conflict. The location of power would move from legal-institutional frameworks to networks of relations and interactions between foreign and domestic stakeholders. State institutions would not be considered static, but a "powerful, metaphysical effect of practices that make such structures appear to exist" (Mitchell 1991, p. 94). Such relationality would entail an empathetic state building that is dependent on local legitimacy, and less obsessed with imposing external political and economic orders. This would generate reality-congruent knowledge that would be more prone to mitigating negative dynamics of state building.

Norbert Elias's work on civilizing processes could enhance our understanding of the social changes required for generating political obligations in post-conflict societies. Elias's focus on individual pacification and

self-restrained citizens, as well as his respect for centralized authority, are useful for understanding how subordination to established rules may be a pragmatic approach to achieving autonomy. In his provocative account of personal autonomy, Bernard Berofsky argues that we "subordinate certain interests for the sake of goals deemed more important" (1995, p. 10). Applying Elias's ideas of the individual to post-conflict contexts would engender an active, post-national and critical citizenry rooted in the principles of individualism, self-restraint, respect for joint public goods and community solidarity. This could represent an optimal solution for reducing ethno-nationalist inflammatory practices and achieving gradual inter-group reconciliation. Taking a figurational view, social change could become possible through various modes of local critical, yet non-violent, agencies. It should be seen as a perennial process of transformation and recirculation of power among social forces creating such social figurations as promote peace, justice, equality and recognition of difference. Needs- and rights-based dependency would create complex interdependencies, in turn enabling differentiated forms of self-restraint, which respond to social pressure to create joint commitments and to respect state institutions.

Finally, Elias's ideas on pacification could be useful as a means to explore everyday pacification in post-conflict societies, not through external constraints, but through everyday conflict-avoidance gestures, embarrassment and social pressure, and grassroots individual and collective transformations. The recent work of Roger Mac Ginty (2014) on everyday peace practices in Northern Ireland reveals the positive impact of everyday conflict-avoidance agency in maintaining societal peace. Critical pedagogy of citizenship needs to cultivate a culture of community activism, promote the discussion of common problems with neighbours and find ways of mobilizing the community to resolve them. Hence, individualism is crucial for giving agents the autonomy to make choices that constitute joint commitments. Solutions should not be sought through the imitation of external blueprints, but rather they should be generated through a local deliberative and inclusive process that recognizes local cultural complexity and sensitivity.

This chapter has pointed out multiple similarities and complementarities between Elias's figurational sociology and contemporary state-building studies. His sociology undoubtedly deserves greater attention, as it will expand relational perspectives on state building. Most importantly, what state-building studies can learn from Elias is that state building and social peace is a process deeply rooted in contextual peculiarities, prone

to unintended consequences, and subject to constant transformation. Hence, capturing the figuration of peace after violent conflicts requires intentional actions, events and non-events to be accounted for, as well as the spectrum of consequences that together constitute the state of peace in post-conflict societies (Visoka 2016b). In this regard, post-conflict societies and international interventions provide a fertile epistemological site for figurational sociologists to apply their theories as well as generate new empirical research.

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CHAPTER 9

The Figurational Approach and Commemorating Violence in Central and Eastern Europe

Marta Bucholc

Maurice Halbwachs is one of the founders of the sociological study of memory. He probably did not suspect that his seminal ideas would develop into a vast interdisciplinary research agenda in contemporary societies—the memories of violence (see Pakier and Wawrzyniak 2015, p. 15). The urge to think about past violence has been one of the most important triggers for development of memory studies. The goal of this chapter is to approach memorizing and commemorating violence from the standpoint of the Eliasian sociology of social processes (or "figurational" sociology). I will not offer a fully fledged figurational explanation of the phenomenon. My goal is to outline a theoretical agenda for understanding the current revival of memories of violence in figurational terms.

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I will focus on the active work of memory: reconstructing past experiences of violence, representing and framing them in contemporary social practices, so as to endow them with new significance. Therefore, from a vast repertoire of memory studies, I choose the word "commemorating". Jeffrey Olick was right to notice that "the topos of memory has often been profligate, pulling in commemoration; reminiscence and representation in ways that sometimes erase differences" (Olick 2015, p. ix). Concurring with this remark as a *memento*, I decided not to stick to any of the strict terminological conventions elaborated in this robust field. I use the notion of commemoration in a broader sense than is usually meant by many (such as raising memorials, engaging in rituals or producing cultural artefacts with an express intention to evoke an event, a person or a group). By "commemorating", I refer to actively memorizing something important and worthy of remembrance, as opposed to just having it stored in the memory.

My examples come from Central and Eastern Europe. The wave of commemorations of violence and the increasing role of memory studies in contemporary social sciences are not specific to any part of the world. Writing about hate crimes and commemorating hate-inspired violence, Joachim J. Savelsberg and Ryan D. King correctly noticed that:

> The issue of hate and hate-inspired violence has grown globally. It joins other concerns, where global scripts have increasingly informed nation-level policies and practices, including environmentalism, education, economics, social control, and human rights. Fuelled by the genocides of the 20th century, the rise of the issue of hate was most recently advanced after the fall of the Soviet Union, when the demise of the Cold War ended the balance of non-engagement between the two superpowers. (Savelsberg and King 2005, pp. 579–580)

Global political developments undoubtedly made the topic of violence more important. However, it does not mean that the high tide of commemorating is a global phenomenon affected by the same factors everywhere, but it suggests it is certainly reasonable to take into account the global context of each specific case.

Still, even from this point of view, Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is a good place to start. It has been the scene of some of the bloodiest war tragedies of human history. This is an area deeply traumatized by the experience of violence. It is also a region of deep divisions, formerly isolated by the Iron Curtain, and now by the newly forged barriers between the East

and the West, the North and the South. Since 1945 and, repeatedly, since 1989, an intensive process of identity building has been accompanied not only by acts of violence, but also by a particularly intensive and increasingly reflexive work of memory, culminating in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. As one of the pioneers of memory studies in Poland, Elżbieta Tarkowska, noted:

> [In the countries of CEE] in the period of post-communist change, we observe a genuine return to the past, which is expressed not only in seeking support for unclear identities, but also in the attempt to fill in numerous blank spots—areas of ignorance, silence and taboo, imposed by the previous political system, censorship, propaganda and ideology—in search of regaining a mythologized and manipulated past, as well as in restoring historical continuity. (Tarkowska 2013, p. 292)

Emergence of new levels of integration, such as the European Union and NATO, set the CEE on a new track and reconfigured its regional power set-up and related collective imageries. The integration of former Soviet countries into the global world is accompanied by a revival of old conflicts and tensions, resulting in a conundrum of contradictory narratives (see Bogumił et al. 2015; Dobre 2015). Practical and economic problems of lustration and property restitution, still unresolved, reinforce these processes, bringing memories into the symbolic war theatre (see Śpiewak 2005; Tyszka 2015).

I will come back to this issue in the final part of this chapter, where I will refer to globality as a potential horizon for human integration. However, my starting point will be Elias's concept of memory. I take it as a platform for discussing commemorations of violence in the context of figurational dynamics between the established and the outsiders. Elias's insight into structural social mechanics and their symbolic components will be completed by a civilizational perspective on commemorating violence. In the conclusion, I will argue that we gain a more comprehensive view of the social memory of violence, both in the CEE and elsewhere, by combining the civilizational dimension with an insight into group identity formation and power division.

1 Remembering as a Symbolic Function

Elias did not complete his symbol theory. Neither did he apply it systematically in empirical studies. Apart from preliminary guidelines to be derived from *An Essay on Time,* it is up to Elias's contemporary readers

to develop his initial insights into an interdisciplinary study of symbols. Among the basic tenets of Elias's approach, one deserves particular attention: all functions of symbols should be analyzed together; no artificial distinctions should be made between thinking, speaking, knowing and—last but not least—remembering (Elias 2011, pp. 85, 91). This is why Elias finds the notion of function or symbolic activity more useful than the concept of knowledge, which is more commonly used to denote one or more symbolic functions. Elias favours a holistic and dynamic account of human communication. Therefore, as far as terminology is concerned, he also prefers verbal forms suggestive of processuality rather than the substantive ones that are predominantly employed in sociological theories of knowledge.

Elias's ambition leads to the necessity to explain the components or the dimensions of human symbolic communication. I have discussed the provisional delimitations of thinking, speaking and knowing, and their respective relations to remembering, in my previous work (see Bucholc 2013, 2015). Here I will only add one remark. According to Elias, remembering is a basic communicational function insofar as it involves operations on symbols stored as resources for thinking, knowing and speaking. Remembering consists in bringing symbolic representations back from a place where they had been stored in the past in order to use them in the present.

Featuring collective and social memory in Eliasian terms is in fact a straightforward inference from the above. Symbols employed in thinking, knowing and speaking come from human interplay, which is an effect of human interdependence. We interact because we need to and not only because it is, metaphysically speaking, part of our nature. In *The Symbol Theory,* Elias adds an important appendix to his model of models (see Mennell 1992, p. 175) developed in *Involvement and Detachment.* The level of human integration is part of nature, attained and maintained thanks to communication relying on the symbolic resources used actively in the present, but gathered and preserved throughout the history of the species. Apart from storage space in memory, Elias also frequently stressed the role of tangible, physical or otherwise objectified forms from which symbolical representations are taken, such as clocks (Elias 2007a), works of art (Elias 2009, 2010b) or poems (Elias 2010a). All of those are connected to the states of social integration and human figurations, understandable and interpretable only by remembering. Therefore, remembering is essentially a collective work: it is based on a collectively created, shared and

maintained set of symbols connecting the present to the past. It is also inherently social: if it were not for communication activities performed on the human integration level, there would little point in remembering anything. Remembering is a sort of time management, which only evolved when humans developed an urge to distinguish past, present and future as a result of their participation in social processes (Elias 2007a; see also Tabboni 2001; Barnes 2004).

The latter point is perhaps more Durkheimian than Elias himself might have wished. Structures of social organization (its figurational layout, including its changes in time) and structures of culture (relations between symbols and flows between the symbols actually used and those stored for the future) are inseparable, even though their mutual conditioning does not result in simple analogies once claimed to buttress some elementary forms of classification (see Durkheim and Mauss [1903] 1974). Moreover, individual remembering and social communication are also inextricably interlinked. Elias portrays relatively dependent humans with differentiated levels of control over symbolic communication, reflecting their respective power differentials. They arrange their world together by way of symbolic exchanges applying past resources to current pursuits, not amicably and consensually, but through constant struggles for power. One aspect of power is control over symbolic resources. Whether we choose to evoke George Orwell or Plato at this point, the figurational positions which allow individuals and groups occupying them to control what can and what cannot be revoked from the past are the positions of power. Consequently, one facet of power is to regulate the function of remembering.

2 The Memory of the Established

The Marxist thesis that the powerful control the means of symbolic production, just as they control the means of material production, needs to be qualified to hold water in any real-life society. Elias never pictured this aspect of symbolic domination as a one-way downward flow of prefabricated contents, or a systematic production of false consciousness. It would be more precise to say that the most powerful have, on average, greater influence on what is remembered, but the final effect will always be a function of an intricate nexus of interdependencies and cannot be reduced to structural considerations. The powerful are not divinely preordained, and their underdogs are created as the figuration goes along, even if the exact pace of changes in their relative positions is hardly noticeable in

some times and places. The more complex the figuration and the more interdependent the people are, the less sense it makes to label some as "those in power" and others as "subjugated"—even though the Marxist theory of social stratification has become a great popular inspiration, despite the difficulty of empirically corroborating it. However, despite all these reservations concerning social complexity, there are intergroup mechanisms which sometimes simplify the power structures, allowing for a clear distinction between those who hold power and those who do not.

Elias and John L. Scotson described one such scenario in *The Established and the Outsiders* (Elias and Scotson 1994). A settled and well-ordered small-sized community is confronted with an inflow of migrant industrial workers. It becomes necessary to negotiate the rules of co-existence and, as might reasonably be expected, to revise the distribution of power in a new figuration. What happens next is a coordinated and, to some extent, organized effort by the locals (now becoming "the established") to ban the newcomers ("the outsiders") from local social life, including power structures. The resulting mild version of segregation could probably be transformed into something much less benign, had the pre-existing economic and political framework of large-scale social organizations not prevented further development of hostility and scorn. In all likelihood, it is with those remote grim consequences of an otherwise commonplace social set-up in mind that Elias wrote: "Exclusion and stigmatization of the outsiders by the established group were thus powerful weapons used by the latter to maintain their identity, to assert their superiority, keeping others firmly in their place" (Elias 1994, p. xviii).

The established apply various means, of which one in particular is interesting for a student of memory: the work on symbols, aimed at representing the established as better and the outsiders as worse, lower and undeserving kind of human beings. This picture is subsequently imputed to the outsiders and becomes a part of their group self-description, a mechanism which has been found in gender relations, ethnic, cultural and religious minorities, and political struggles. However, the urban case analyzed by Elias and Scotson clearly demonstrates all the essential elements of this pattern. Foreseeably, the established, having a long tradition of living together to fall back on as they seek to reinforce their good picture of themselves, become a consolidated group with a strong identity forged in defence against the allegedly dangerous outsiders. Identity-building mechanisms are there in order to defend the "we" against a "them" which is seen as different and therefore threatening (see Swaan 1995). The outsiders, in

turn, having few links to each other and little in common apart from their migrant background, have very few extra symbolic weapons to counteract exclusion and are not able to construe any viable positive group identity. Hence an intergroup dynamic takes shape, with one group getting stronger and more solid as a result of the confrontation, whereas the other group is atomized and weakly interconnected, and would hardly deserve to be called a group were it not for its position in the figuration.

What effect would such a set-up have on the memories of the two groups involved? It is very easy to forecast that over time (*caeteris paribus*, which in the case of Winston Parva would certainly not be the case) the established would work up a set of symbols referring to their glorious past as indigenous inhabitants of the fine central neighbourhoods of their lovely town, true salt of the earth, bearers and keepers of the good old ways. In fact, even though Elias and Scotson's analysis did not thematize memory as a specific research issue, there are many indications that it formed an important dimension of their study. Consider the following quote from Elias's introduction:

> The established group of all residents consisted of families who had lived in this neighborhood for two or three generations. They had undergone together a group process—from the past via the present towards the future—which provided them with a stock of common memories, attachments and dislikes. Without regard to this diachronic group dimension, the rationale and the meaning of the pronoun "we" which they used with reference to each other cannot be understood. (Elias 1994, p. xxxviii)

The established identity was constructed by loading with a positive value charge the symbols referring to being there and being from there (Elias 1994, p. xviiii), but also by having been there for a while. Time is inherent in identity, Elias says. In the case of the established, the direction of memory work is clear, but what about the outsiders?

The memories of the outsiders might conceivably evolve in two directions. First, they might become a projection of the present domination of the established onto the past, along the lines of "we have always been that way". Remembering would not draw on any symbolic resource except the one developed since the onset of bipolar figurational dynamics. In particular, all the past experiences independent of or preceding the outsiders' status would be suppressed, and all symbols referring to them would be abandoned in thinking, speaking and knowing. Eventually, there would

be only one memory left in the community, that of the established. Let us now imagine that the dark scenario launched in Winston Parva at some point comes to include intergroup violence, with the outsiders ending up as victims (unthinkable the other way, *caeteris paribus*). What would be retained from this episode? A glorious victory by the established against an evil horde of aggressive foes, and quite probably a big empty nothing on the part of the outsiders.

The memories of the victims could be annihilated entirely. Recollections of individual suffering might survive in private family histories and even be transferred intergenerationally. They would thus become part of very nearly private languages of commemorating violence. Nevertheless, they would hardly achieve the status of a common set of symbols shared by the outsiders as a group, unless they were supported by some form of organization. In less dispersed and more interconnected outsider groups (a large family structure would be an advantage, as would be a common and well-articulated economic interest), it is also conceivable that the almost ungroup-like bunch of people with little or no identity except the negative one assigned to them by the established, might develop one based on the shared experience of violence and might use it as a resource for building group structures. Such an unlikely scenario would depend on many figurational factors, which I will explore in the next section. However, one conclusion seems plausible: once the established manage to gain control over symbolic resources, they start distributing the cards in the game of remembering, whereby the outsiders are inevitably the losers.

Many cases of this kind have been described in memory scholarship. Bipolar dynamics annihilating victims' memories of violence have been at work in the cases of the Jews, Belarussians, Ukrainians, Roma, Poles, Germans, Russians, Kashubians, Lemkos, Warmians, members of the Catholic, Orthodox and Uniate churches and many others, who from time to time happened to be minorities either for ethnic, religious or linguistic reasons, or a combination of all these. Glorious victories (or glorious defeats) of the Red Army, the Wehrmacht, the Polish underground National Army *(Armia Krajowa*), the communist and anti-communist resistances in Yugoslavia, and many others, fail to be accompanied by stories of suffering of victimized minorities. In each case, the established subsequently used annihilation policies as a result of figurational upheavals which usually trigger violence (see Zaremba 2005). The politics of memory of the CEE communist governments provides an apt illustration: it was an attempt to establish in power a political force which

did not command a majority anywhere in the CEE after 1920 and/or 1945, depending on the country (see Śpiewak 2012). Not only violence against minorities, but also marginalization of minority memories of violence, were employed as an identity-building device (see Zaremba 2005) to create a platform of support among the majority populations. Thus "the Communist ruling elites attempted to establish themselves as the true bearers of national traditions" (Kilias 2013, p. 299) and defenders of national integrity against subversive minority imageries.

Famous cases include the so-called "Kielce pogrom", the last European pogrom in Kielce, Poland in 1946 (see Engel 1998). It is one of the best-known acts of anti-Jewish post-war violence, which was absent from official teaching or public discourse in post-war Poland until the 1990s, despite well-preserved knowledge about the event. All or almost all documentary traces were carefully removed. An impassioned debate around the murder of Jews in Jedwabne, Poland, yet another post-war anti-Jewish act of brutal violence, erupting on the publication of Jan Tomasz Gross' book *Neighbors*, proves that the communist authorities chose their memory politics wisely (see Gross 2001). Moreover, as Jarosław Kilias remarks, after the fall of communism "the efforts to disseminate one official vision of the past have continued" in countries such as the Czech Republic and Poland (Kilias 2013, p. 299). That there would be so much anti-minority post-war violence was hardly ever reflected on systematically, as Marcin Zaremba demonstrated in his work on fear and brutality of life in the early Stalinist period in Poland (see Zaremba 2012). A stout denial of there ever having been such violence was, and still is, accompanied by suppression of any recollections of personal participation or, as the case may be, benefits derived from such violent acts.

The perpetrators must actively annihilate not only the competing memories of the outsiders, but also those recollections which would deny their glorious narrative. A recent and very controversial book by Polish philosopher and psychologist Andrzej Leder (2014) tells a story of suppression and denial by the established in Poland after 1945. Leder argues that a phantasmatic representation of the Jew has taken place in a society where almost all the Jews were destroyed by the Nazis. The annihilation of these people left behind them material goods, infrastructure and business practices. These were taken over by the remaining population and, after the war, frequently brutally protected against those few survivors who came back to claim them. The dispossession of the Jews was a violent act performed by German occupational forces, but maintained and legalized by

the established post-war regimes of CEE countries. It was an important mechanism for the economic emancipation of destitute pre-war peasantry. Leder's psychological point, though it is only meant to apply to Poland, seems to be generalizable onto established–outsider figurations in which violence has been triggered: if no glory can be drawn from violence, the next best way is to hush it all up and make sure that nobody ever mentions it again. A fantastic image of an outsider is left to support a postulated bipolar division. It may provide enough fuel for anti-minority reaction even many decades later, thus ensuring that the identity-related symbols of the established remain amply charged with sentiment.

These few remarks on figurational developments in the CEE lead to a conclusion that seems to negate the plain facts of contemporary reality. It seems unlikely that the outsiders could create and use symbolic resources so as to commemorate their experiences of violence, provided of course, that they remain outsiders. So, how can this set-up possibly change? How is it possible for the outsiders publicly to know, think and speak about the violence they experienced, and for revisionist memory scholarship to flourish?

3 *Habeas memoriam, habeas vocem*

It may seem pretentious to start this section in Latin. Still, the weight of the problem is better rendered in this solemn language. The voice and the memory of the victims are inseparable, for only those memories which are expressed can be transmitted. Only once an opportunity to communicate the experience is granted, can the experience itself be remembered and become the resource on which human symbolic activities operate.

We have a surprising number of victims' voices: the recollections, for example, of one young Jewish woman who dug herself out of the Nazi death pit at Babi Yar, in Kiev; or another one who managed to do the same at Ponary, near Vilnius. We have the memoirs of some of the few dozen survivors of Treblinka. We have an archive of the Warsaw ghetto, painstakingly assembled, buried and then (for the most part) found. We have the diaries kept by the Polish officers shot by the Soviet NKVD in 1940 at Katyn, unearthed along with their bodies. We have notes thrown from the buses taking Poles to death pits during the German killing actions of the same year. We have the words scratched on the wall of the synagogue in Kovel; and those left on the wall of the Gestapo prison in Warsaw. We have the recollections of Ukrainians who survived the Soviet famine of 1933;

those of Soviet prisoners of war who survived the German starvation campaign of 1941; and those of Leningraders who survived the starvation siege of 1941–1944 (Snyder 2010, p. xv).

Timothy Snyder continues to enumerate many more individual voices of the victims in his work on Central European "Bloodlands", but a short excerpt is enough to prove a point: we hear more and more voices of the victims, recorded, dug out, opened up to the public, broadcast, uploaded to the web for open access, and so on. It creates a unique professional opportunity for a scholar, who in turn becomes an interpretive amplifier, making these voices universally audible and, at the same time, understandable as being part of a larger social process. It is a work with a moral and ethical agenda behind it, apart from any purely scientific interest. Many memory scholars act "as memory agents" (Wawrzyniak and Pakier 2013, p. 265). But the scientific use to which the voices of the victims may be put depends on the availability of the voices and, in particular, their availability to the public (or, at least, the opportunity to publicize them by the way of scientific investigation).

Why are the voices of the victims more sonorous in Europe of the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries than before? The established–outsiders dynamic clarifies why the victims, even if socially dispersed, politically disorganized, marginalized and symbolically cast out, are nevertheless construed as a group, thereby acquiring a chance to work out an identity based on their common experience of victimization. Nevertheless, this does not explain why the voice of this group would be, in some circumstances, reinforced in the public sphere. The odds seem to be against the facts (the victims) here. Therefore, a civilizational perspective is required to take the next step in the analysis of commemorating violence in the CEE.

The "habeas" in the title of this section paraphrases a legal act that is usually (though not quite adequately) interpreted as instrumental in limiting the use of uncontrolled violence by the powerful, and subjecting it to rules with the ultimate aim of protecting those who are weaker. The civilizing process, as Elias used the term, makes the lives of the weaker safer and their deaths more peaceful and foreseeable. Of course, the same applies to the stronger and the more powerful, for civilization generally makes human lives safer and more predictable. But it is a process of progressing human integration, counteracting the indiscriminate and arbitrary use of violence, by shaping habitus which prevent individuals from engaging in violence by making it abhorrent, unthinkable or, at least,

limiting its application to very specialized cases of war, self-defence and sport. As I once wrote:

> Norbert Elias understood violence well. In his writing there is an omnipresent intimacy with violence, which would be inconceivable from any perspective other than that of a likely target. It is rarely granted to the strong, the powerful, and the ferocious to understand their own strength, power, and ferocity. The weak and the vulnerable have always had the doubtful privilege of being able best to comprehend the mystery of human violence. (Bucholc 2015, p. 11)

Elias, as a member of a vulnerable minority in Central Europe, belonged to a particularly cognitively and relatively privileged group of outsiders. True, his concept of civilization arose from his reading of the history of European state formation, and the changes of manners which accompanied the centralization and monopolies of physical force, symbolic power and tax collection. But a very immediate consequence of this process was the elimination of physical strength and the desire to kill one another as a major determinant of social power. These were replaced by other indices of power, more accessible to those who do not promise much as warriors, but who tend to make excellent victims: the sickly, women, children, elderly people and all sorts of minorities, discriminated against in terms of the possession of weapons and social organization.

It was a long process. As Jared Diamond succinctly put it in yet another of his best-selling books, which in many ways, probably unknown to the author, convey to the public a popular version of Eliasian historical sociology: "around 7,500 years ago, people had to learn, for the first time in history, how to encounter strangers regularly without attempting to kill them" (Diamond 1999, p. 273). After 7,500 years, an outsider is still a stranger, a home-made one, as often as not in order to make the killing easier despite the accumulated civilizational constraints which Elias debunked in his *Germans* (Elias 2013). The outsiders are the main beneficiaries of civilization, because it increases the chance of their surviving. Since society, according to Elias, is only possible while some level of civilization is maintained, even in the simplest human figurations, it seems that Friedrich Nietzsche was in fact quite right: society is made for the weakest, even though it is not, by any means, their invention.

The point about civilization applies to voicing minority memories of violence in two ways. The first has to do with the outsiders gaining the

ability to remember their own experiences of violence and commemorate them. While remembering is only possible if symbolic resources are available to the outsiders, there is little chance of their experience being commemorated unless the established loosen their control over the symbols in their possession. It is, in fact, what happened in memory policies of many countries at the turn of the twenty-first century: a space for more pluralism has been requested and usually granted, such space to be filled with alternative, minority accounts of the past. Thus, a revaluation of common symbols is launched (see Śpiewak 2005; Nijakowski 2008). Of course, this in turn frequently activates the memories of the established and adds more energy to their public expression, which sometimes takes the form of vested institutional interests, as in the case of the Museum of Warsaw Uprising (see Żychlińska 2009), the Museum of Polish Jews POLIN, both in Warsaw, or the Terror House in Budapest (see Bogumił 2015). The struggle for symbols is particularly aggressive in those countries where the balance of winners and losers after the transformations of the 1990s is not quite decided upon or has recently been challenged, as in former Yugoslavia, Russia or Ukraine. Nevertheless, while controversies continue, many developments in the pluralization of memory proceed and introduce possibilities of commemorating violence into the everyday life of social institutions and local communities.

An aspect of this process which particularly deserves an Eliasian interpretation is the emergence of the European Union as a new integration level. It has gradually expanded to encompass most CEE countries, including those representing the established and/or the outsiders in twentieth-century (and earlier) figurations entailing violent confrontations: Germans, Poles, Lithuanians, Slovaks, Czechs, Hungarians, Romanians, Bulgarians and Croatians. The list might also include many minorities which have never gained the status of a nation or a separate nation state. This new level of complexity revives many antagonisms, but it also creates conditions for dialogue over the past instead of fighting over it. As Elias explained in his analysis of British parliamentary life (cf. Elias 2008, pp. 11, 41ff; see also Bucholc 2015, pp. 105ff), replacing words for swords always equals pure civilizational gain, improves social stability and prolongs the effects of protection granted to the weak (see Bucholc 2015, p. 147ff). A great many new phenomena could be evoked as examples of this process: common memory commissions working out inoffensive and fair schoolbooks, international scientific conferences, journals and publications on memory in CEE,[1] international bodies and non-governmental organizations

dedicated solely to memory questions, museums of memory, exhibitions of artists working on memory or inspired by it, new books telling stories set in the recent past, and new artistic productions, web portals and monuments. These and many other developments testify to the effect of new figurational logic consisting in increasing pluralism, multipolarity and interdependence between bearers of various memories on the availability of symbols for commemorating minority experience of violence.

The abundance of scholarly and non-scholarly attempts at writing transnational, collective European historical narratives (see Wawrzyniak and Pakier 2013, p. 265; Pakier and Wawrzyniak 2015, p. 5ff) is evidence of the popularity of this dynamic not only among social scientists (who are, of course, always in search of a new subject in which to specialize), but also politicians, community leaders, artists and journalists. The notion of "dialogic memory" was coined to express the general direction of these developments:

> Dialogic memory has a special relevance for Europe; it could produce a new type of nation state that is not exclusively grounded in pride but also accepts its dark legacies, thus ending a destructive history of violence by including the victims of this violence into its own memory. Only such an inclusive memory, which is based on the moral standard of accountability and human rights, can credibly back up the protection of human rights in the present and support the values of a civil society in the future. (Assmann 2015, p. 33)

The second civilizational aspect of voicing memories of violence is related to the perpetrators' readiness to acknowledge their agency in the violence of the past and repent of it, actively and publicly, in the present. The very urge for the perpetrator to hide or hush up the deeds of violence, or at least to deny their responsibility, is a sign of civilizational advance compared to a situation described by Elias in his famous (though controversial) analysis of a mediaeval knight's course of life (see Bucholc 2015, p. 27ff). As stated in the previous section, the established–outsiders interplay does not necessarily require the established to be actively engaged in violence; nor does it require them to suppress the memories of their violent actions. However, an established group which agrees to have its agency as the aggressor remembered, and actively supports its commemoration, is taking yet another step towards an even greater civilizational protection of the weaker. All of this is dependent on the sincerity of such efforts, which may very well be sheer hypocrisy. What counts is the resulting revision of

the symbolic resource and making it available for a different manner of knowing, speaking and remembering. The meaning comes from the performative power of a speech act and it is not from the speaker's intention.

One speech act of particular interest in this context is a public apology and an act of forgiving, most probably a facet of a more general "politics of regret" (Olick 2007). Karolina Wigura-Kuisz conducted extensive case studies of public apologies made by politicians: Germany's Willy Brandt to Jews and Poland's Aleksander Kwaśniewski to Ukrainians (see Wigura 2011). She described the circumstances of apology and forgiveness as parts of political strategies grounded in a vision of human capability of guilt and repentance, originating from Jewish and Christian traditions. It may well be added that to offer a public apology, which is an act of self-humiliation, is a very risky move on the part of a person occupying a position of power in any figuration involving the established and the outsiders. It is a move which raises the victims and diminishes the relative status of the one acknowledging the guilt. To accept this consequence, the established must have gone quite a long way along the axis of civilization and the recognition of the symbolic rights of the weaker. However, to accept an apology and, as the case may be, offer forgiveness is not necessarily beneficial to the victims, either. A memory of unjust suffering is a symbolic resource, which—as I have remarked in the previous section—may be used to construe group identity and feed intragroup symbolic exchange. If a perpetrator's apology is accepted, the value of this resource may be reduced. Therefore, to offer forgiveness also requires the victim to trust in the civilizational level of the repentant.

Another formalized speech act allowing for a revision of the symbolic resource (or, sometimes, preventing it) is regulation of hate crimes, and even legal regulation of remembering related to past acts of violence. Many countries, including CEE countries, have introduced laws (either at a constitutional or statutory level) penalizing crimes of hate against minorities, which need not necessarily involve violence (see Savelsberg and King 2005). Extensive media coverage of hate crimes usually provides an opportunity to refresh a narrative of plurality and fairness, as well as an account of guilt and responsibility, in the face of deviant behaviour. The latter is usually represented as an act of a minority within a majority of the established: the Neo-Nazis, the radical nationalists, the racists, the religious fundamentalists, the educationally underprivileged, not to mention the mentally unbalanced, judged as acting upon disturbed symbolic operations. The fear of small numbers, which Arjun Appadurai

mostly discovered in non-European modern contexts (2006), is also at work here: a small number of the established are afraid of the outsiders, who are afraid of a small number of the established, who in turn are afraid of a small number of the violent among themselves. The very status of the established is, in fact, transient and questionable here: the minorities are striving to establish themselves, because by doing so, they gain a huge power advantage, and the majorities are trying to prevent them from achieving this goal because they wish to keep the advantage to themselves. This brings the interdependence of the established and the outsiders to the forefront. Hate-crime prevention and other similar legal instruments are not only an identity-building measure, but also a response to an incipient spiral of fear by a centralized power in a complex figuration.

4 Conclusion: Involved in Commemoration

The notion of a spiral of fear brings us to the final part of this chapter and to Elias's famous metaphor of "fishermen in the maelstrom". Fear and social divisions tend to make people focus more on themselves, their own group, its interest and its symbolic representations of the world around it. This complex of subject orientation, self-motivation, emotional hueing and strong concentration on the present and its immediate troubles and threat, Elias proposed to call "involvement" and opposed it to detachment. He believed detached thinking contributed to a much more reliable and reality-congruent knowledge, but he was well aware that it requires a very particular figurational setting to flourish and hardly appeals to minds exposed to a real or perceived threat, especially that of violence. Hence the spiral of fear, which produces a spiral of violence. We are afraid, so we think more and more exclusively in terms of ourselves against the world. Therefore, we start to fear the others and we feel that we have to defend ourselves against them. We launch violence as the ultimate means of self-defence, which makes the others turn violent upon us, because we constitute a threat to which they also respond with fear. Each group engaged in a spiral of fear and violence works intensively with their respective symbolic resources, loading symbols with involved meanings to correspond to the demands of the present moment. Remembering is set on providing the right kind of material for knowing, thinking and speaking the right things, the things of perceived survival value. What is so tragic is, of course, that such fear-driven knowledge seldom has any real survival value in the long run and in complex conditions, where dangers have

complicated etiologies calling for scientific explanations (for an extensive and illuminating discussion of involvement and detachment see Mennell 1992, p. 159ff).

To commemorate is to become involved in a symbolic representation of the past. It is a case of finding (or inventing) the right symbols and charging them with the right identity-making load. Identity building is necessarily a process of becoming involved, whether on the part of the established or of the outsiders. But becoming involved in identity supported by remembering past experience of violence also means that we are becoming different from those who do not share our memory and our commemoration practice. This may be a beginning of memory wars, as is the case for Poland, Ukraine and Russia, among others (see Bogumił 2015)—the Ukrainian case being particularly complex, as the memory in this country takes the form of a domestic, "civil" memory war reflecting a profound political conflict (Zhurzhenko 2015, p. 171). Various involvements combat in the public field, and many more may still lie in waiting to be activated by new figurations emergent with international integration. Meanwhile new wars and new territorial claims are creating new threats for many identities and preparing the ground for new groups to be cast to the margins of their previously stable societies.

A particularly interesting feature of these wars is that many groups compete for the status of victim, struggling to represent the past so as to make their own experience pass for that of the weaker. This is not unprecedented in history, because those against whom a wrong has been committed may claim damages and symbolic compensation. But, as Elias's disillusioned account of law teaches us (see Bucholc 2015, pp. 49ff), the very idea that the weaker may have a claim against the stronger, which is a prerequisite of the stronger trying to pass themselves off as victims, is a sign of civilizational advance. In a radically unequal society based on the rule of the fittest, the weaker have no claims.

In Central and Eastern Europe, we are today facing a new cultural phenomenon. Its source is a new figurational setting, with many groups actively building alternative visions of the past and striving to introduce new institutional rules of the game, in which the voice of the weaker could be important. These struggles gain from those in power, usually representing the established, although in too many cases they disregard it as propaganda, lip service to cultural and religious heritage or pure hypocrisy. A change has taken place making the remembering of past experiences of violence possible, useful and even attractive from the point of

view of group identity building. But it is also as a part of providing the foundation for higher levels of social integration, in which bearers of competing memories could be incorporated. Including many conflicting narratives in one whole creates a great deal of symbolic havoc and seems a doubtful enterprise in many respects. But a thought experiment on which Elias encouraged us to venture is an even more ground-breaking one: an integration of all humanity, uniting all victims and all oppressors into one "we" identity. A profound revision of the symbolic resources used to commemorate violence is indispensable if humanity as a whole is to rise to the hardly imaginable level of universal integration.

The experience of Central and Eastern Europe is ambivalent in this respect: successful examples of revision and community building are accompanied by a rise of radicalism, denial of pluralist accounts of history and memory wars. Commemorations are counteracted by anti-commemorations and the victims' status is frequently challenged. Integration may be one outcome of the process, but a decivilizing spurt correlating with a rise in fear and violence may be another. In other regions, where relations between the established and the outsiders are differently shaped by their respective historical paths, the outcomes are either more or less encouraging. Various solutions to the problems of transitional justice have been proposed: modes of lustration, access to archival resources and other ways of making the victims' voices audible. There are also tragic cases of the suppression of minority symbolic universes or identity problems being resolved by the acts of organized group violence, civil wars, genocide or ethnocide that we have witnessed over the few past decades and that amply illustrate the fruitfulness of memory studies guided by Eliasian principles. Giving voice to the victims of violence and providing symbolic resources indispensable for their expression seems a commandment of civilization in the common sense of the word. Only by combining the long historical perspective of civilization with a description of group identity formation, and power division in figurations, can we hope to achieve an understanding of the dawning global dimension of commemorating violence.

Note

1. An extensive overview of memory studies in CEE can be found in: Wawrzyniak and Pakier (2013).

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CHAPTER 10

Parliamentary Form of Government, Habitus and Violence: The Case of Iran (1906–1925)

Behrouz Alikhani

This chapter explains how and why a parliamentary form of government collapsed, using as an empirical example the case of the Constitutional Monarchy (1906–1925) in Iran. The figurational and processual approach of Norbert Elias is relevant to the close connection between the process of democratization and the civilizing process. Although this approach has been developed through European empirical examples, it could be applied to other structured societies as well. The chapter seeks to demonstrate that this approach helps to understand and explain problems of democratization, especially in some Middle Eastern societies.

There has been a tendency, especially since the September 11 attacks, to focus on Islam as the main hindrance to the democratization of Middle Eastern societies. However, from a figurational perspective, the democratization problems of these societies, as in other non-Islamic societies, should be seen more as a civilizing problem than a cultural one. Within one "culture" different degrees of civilization can be found, meaning different degrees of self-regulation and self-control. The degree of civilization impacts all aspects of the social life of those involved. Alongside the

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civilizing of the relationships of these human beings, even their relationship to gods can become more civilized. Images of gods can become more passionate, violent and unpredictable to those that appear more just, peaceful and ever-loving figures (Elias 2008b, p. 6). Within civilized relationships in a single "culture" or religion, individuals can regulate their affect-based impulses in a more controlled and long-sighted manner.

Without a sufficient degree of civilization, the development and maintenance of democratic institutions in a society is scarcely possible. Dominant theories of democracy, which are mainly developed from a political science point of view, mostly reduce "democracy" to its institutional dimension. Thereby, they neglect not only its latent (or functional) dimension (Elias 1996, p. 30), but also the habitual dimension of the democratization processes. Through a three-dimensional process-sociological model of democratization (Alikhani 2014) one can become aware of the two neglected dimensions of democratization processes: the functional and the habitual. It is also conceptually possible to elaborate on the relationships between these two dimensions and the institutional dimension.

In the course of processes of democratization, there may be periods in which there is a consequential "non-simultaneity of developments" between the institutional and the habitual dimensions of the democratization processes. Elias describes this as "drag effect of the social habitus" (Elias 2003, p. 283). By using the concept of "social habitus" instead of that of "culture", one becomes aware of the reversibility and the non-simultaneity of social and political developments (Gholamasad 2001, p. 617). In this sense, the concept of "drag effect of the social habitus" refers to the consequences of the transformation of self-experience of the people who are "lagging" behind social transformations at the functional and institutional levels. Dominant political culture theories have some difficulties in taking into account these problems of discontinuities and asynchronies of development in a society: "The assumptions of culturalist theory manifestly lead to an expectation of continuity, even in cases of changes in the objective contexts of political actions" (Eckstein 1988, p. 792).

Thus, the study of the discontinuities has remained either disregarded or considered as "deviant cases" (Eckstein 1988, p. 796). Instead of static and rather imprecise concepts such as "culture" or "political culture", we better grasp processes of democratization and de-democratization with the more dynamic concept of "social habitus". In addition to the "drag effect", the "catch up effect" (Gholamasad 2001, p. 617) of social habitus

can be captured by this processual and empirically oriented concept. From this processual and sociological perspective, the concept of social habitus refers to a specific and more or less individualized stamp which every single individual shares with other members of his or her society. This stamp is a "change continuum" (Gholamasad 2001, pp. 617–618) resulting from processual social interdependencies. By studying the habitual dimension of democratization processes, it becomes possible to ascertain whether the people affected by these processes can identify with the new institutions emerging in the course of democratization processes, and whether, accordingly, they can behave in a more "civilized" way. This allows one to gain a scientific perspective on the emotional anchoring of the new processes and the degree of emotional satisfaction for the people involved. To put it simply, the habitual dimension of democratization refers to the deep internalization of these new institutions and their functional connections. Only then can these processes gain enormous strength through the steering of conduct and feeling of the people involved, which can be socially inherited.

1 The Three Interwoven Structures

In almost all his studies Norbert Elias tried to demonstrate a close link between three main structures: the structure of society, the structure of personality and the structure of state—called by him "survival units". These three structures are very closely connected with each other (Elias 2008a, p. 222; 2006, pp. 298–299; 2001, pp. 148–149). The integration of the structure of the state into sociological explanations was one of the main merits of his work. Elias emphasized a very direct connection between processes of state formation in a society and complementary processes of civilization. From this processual and sociological perspective, the term "civilization" differs from its everyday use as the expression of the self-consciousness of Western societies. It should also be noticed that this unplanned but ordered process is always accompanied by counter-processes, and it indicates a successive structural change in the standards of human behaviour and feeling in a very specific direction:

> As a directed change of social habits of people Norbert Elias shows in his study how external constraints transform from various sides into self-constraints: how in more and more differentiated form human affairs are displaced behind the scenes of social life, covered with feelings of shame

> and how through a constant self-control, the regulations of the whole drives and affects life become more all-embracing, even, and stable. (Gholamasad 1999, p. 30; see also Elias 2009, p. 365)

Based on the examples of some European societies such as Germany, France and Great Britain, Elias empirically demonstrated how in the course of the monopolization of physical violence by the central state, not just the relationships of the people to each other, but also their relationships to themselves changed in a specific direction: "Physical violence as a principle of regulation of competition and elimination struggles for the available power and status opportunities" (Gholamasad 2006, p. 64) becomes more or less suspended from social life. Here, Elias differentiated between two levels: the domestic and the inter-state levels. At the first level and in some societies, he observed processes going in the direction of civilization with the extension of the scope of identification of people affected beyond their pre-state group affiliations (Elias 2008b, p. 7). At the interstate level, however, physical violence still prevails as one of the most important forms of interaction in struggles for power and status chances. In this way, Elias observed a mismatch of standards of behaviour and feeling at these two different but closely interconnected levels, especially in more democratic societies. Due to the absence of an effective monopoly of physical violence at the inter-state level, autocratic-military strategies for resolving conflicts are still predominant. Representatives of parliamentary democracies also act according to these specific patterns of conduct and feeling. Therefore, at this level the use of violence often plays a key role in determining social position in the ranking of the states:

> Like animals in the wildness of the jungle, like tribal groups in humanity's early days, like states throughout history, so the states of today are bound to each other in such a way that sheer physical force and cunning are, in the last resort, the decisive factors in their relationships. (Elias 2007, p. 139)

Domestically, new patterns of conduct and behaviour slowly became established in the course of long-term processes of democratization of some European societies. According to Elias, this new social habitus was one of the most important foundations for the creation of parliamentary governments in these societies. Without this social habitus, coupled with long-term processes of state formation and the suspension of physical violence, settling inter-personal conflicts was barely possible.

In *Studies on the Germans*, Elias worked out the long-term processes of state formation responsible for the outbreak of physical violence during the Weimar Republic in Germany. Based on this example, he demonstrated a direct link between the rise of power of National Socialists and the long-term developments of the attitudes of the Germans which were shaped in a rather authoritarian and military manner (Alikhani 2012, pp. 140–165). According to Elias, the creation of democratic parliamentary institutions after the First World War could not simply bring about the democratization of attitudes and systems of belief of the majority of Germans (Elias 1996, p. 337). This parliamentary form of governance, which requires compromises, as it is based on discussions and arguments, roused the hostility of the less civilized Germans (Elias 2006, p. 299). In the course of the traumatic experience of violent conflicts during the Weimer Republic and the insecurity and disorder that followed, the attachment to the former authoritarian form of governance became even stronger for the majority of Germans. This attachment was expressed in demands for a "strong man" at the top; a strong man who could bring unity again and put an end to divisions between the Germans (Elias 1996, p. 317f.).

In brief, according to Elias a parliamentary form of government requires specific forms of self-constraint. These forms are less developed in pre-state societies than in state societies based on a relatively permanent and stable monopoly of physical violence:

> At earlier stages of development, that is, at the stage represented by tribes and other pre-state survival units, the agencies of self-constraint are usually more permeable to drives, more uneven, more fragile, more labile and less autonomous. They need constant support and reinforcement by external constraints. (Elias 2008b, p. 5)

In a society with a lower degree of pacification and with no relatively stable and permanent monopoly of violence, violence remains one of the main methods of resolving inter-personal conflicts. Every sector of the society becomes affected by this form of conduct and feeling. From a figurational point of view, people who have been raised and educated under authoritarian, military and violent conditions usually think in terms of simple dualism such as enemy/friend or black/white. Parliamentary and democratic ways of conflict resolution with inadequate personality structure put such "uncivilized" people under enormous emotional pressure. They are inclined to exercise physical violence since they were not afforded the opportunity to

learn and internalize civilized patterns of conduct and feeling, which would enable them to control their drive- and affect-based impulses:

> A friend is seen as entirely a friend, and an enemy as entirely an enemy. Simple emotional fronts are desired so that one can give oneself up totally to friendship or enmity. To this basic disposition the parliamentary way of resolving differences, based on negotiation, changing alliances and fronts, moderate friendships, moderate enmities and frequent compromises, can easily become a source of annoyance. A form of rule entailing a measured and regulated settling of differences in public can be extraordinarily irritating to people who are not sure of controlling their own aggression, of resisting their own animosities. (Elias 2006, p. 299)

In this logic, parliamentary party conflicts can even intensify the hostile feelings of such relatively "uncivilized" people, as under this form of governance the expression of hostility through physical action is prohibited and every fight should be carried out at the level of words only (Elias 2006, p. 299). Throughout these processes, physical violence as a principle of "self-value relationships" diminishes (Elias 2008a, p. 226). Maintaining and gaining self-esteem in relation to other people is not allowed through violence. Concretely speaking, violent actions such as duelling, self-justice, honour killing and suicide bombing are forbidden. In the course of the monopolization of violence, the exercise of physical violence can only be exercised by the state. With the associated relative pacification of society,

> The fluctuations in the behavior and in expressions of affect do not disappear completely, but they become moderate. The upward and downward swings are not so great and changes are not so abrupt. (Elias 1992, p. 325)

According to Elias, for people socialized in a parliamentary form of government, "war of words" and parliamentary disputes even provide life with meaning and dignity. These people possess a relatively more autonomous conscience which is less prone to drive and affective impulses (Elias 1990, p. 414).

2 Constitutional Revolution in Iran: From Institutional Democratization to Institutional De-democratization

Up until the Constitutional Monarchy (1906–1925), Iranian society, like German but unlike British society, experienced many breaches and discontinuities. This development was characterized by continuous violent

elimination contests between nomadic tribes in a pre-nation and state society. Constant bloody elimination struggles prevented a relative pacification of society. Due to the balance of power between different strong tribes in Iran, the establishment of a relatively permanent and stable monopoly of violence and taxation was barely possible. This configuration prevented the formation of new social strata which could support the democratizaion of society, as happened in some European societies. For instance, after the invasion of Turkish-Mongolian nomadic tribes from the eleventh and twelfth centuries almost every nomadic dynasty was replaced in a very violent way by another nomadic dynasty. This situation lasted until the twentieth century (Ashraf 1980, p. 38).

In the mid-nineteenth century, in Iran the traumatic experiences of defeats by other nation states, such as Russia and Great Britain, led to a strong desire for reform.[1] While reforms were first aimed at the military, gradually they found their way into the political and economic sectors (Adamiyat 2006, p. 162). The main goal was to establish a strong central government which could offer protection to its citizens. But the ruling Qajar dynasty (1785–1925) suffered from structural weaknesses. Serious and lasting reforms were prevented by corruption at the court, and also by the lack of a permanent and stable monopoly of force and taxation in the country. Iran's "semi-colonial situation" (Ashraf 1980, p. 46) also impeded the development of a strong central government. Nevertheless, under the Qajar dynasty, especially during Naser al-Din Shah's long reign, a small but ever-growing middle class emerged. This class was later to play an important role in the Constitutional Revolution (Foran 2007, p. 195).

The most important demand of the Constitutional Revolutionaries under the leadership of the clerics, the bazaaris and the merchants was to establish a House of Justice (*'edâlat khâneh*), an institution like a court. However, gradually, the intellectually oriented members of the revolution who were familiar with European political systems were asking for the establishment of a parliament (Ettehadieh 2002, pp. 43–45). Within a relatively short period of time a Constitutional Monarchy was established. Constitutions of some European countries, especially Belgium and France, were taken as models for the design of an Iranian constitution.

The failure of the monarchy and the return to a dictatorship led by Reza Khan, after only nineteen years, cannot be understood properly without considering the type of conflict resolution among the Constitutionalists from the first to the fifth Parliament.[2] While a strong spurt of democratization can be seen on the institutional and functional levels after the Constitutional Revolution, at the same time one can observe a continuation of the familiar patterns of feeling and behaviour by the majority of

the Constitutionalists, who were anything but parliamentary and peaceful. From a processual and sociological perspective, this institutional de-democratization must be justified as a function of a drag effect of the social habitus by the majority of Constitutionalists at that time. Below I will try to show briefly how the so-called Constitutionalists themselves, due to their less democratic social habitus, could contribute to a process of institutional de-democratization and the outbreak of physical violence. The Reza Khan coup fourteen years after the revolution can be more clearly understood in the light of these violent events. According to this processual and sociological approach, Reza Khan, like many other charismatic personalities, is seen as a product of the societal needs of the majority of the society's members. They were asking for a strong leader after a period of disorder and uncertainty they had themselves created under a parliamentary government. Similar to Germany in 1933 and France in 1852, a strong leader needed to come forward and create peace due to the lagging of peaceful methods of conflict resolution in the newly created parliamentary institutions (Elias 1990, p. 49). In Iranian society during the Constitutional Monarchy (1906–1925), there was ample opportunity for the development of this kind of leadership position, which could fulfil the needs of the majority of Iranians. Reza Khan filled this position more effectively than his rivals. To understand the reasons for the increase in the power of this *position,* not merely the *person*, attention must be paid to the dynamics which led to the failure of the Constitutional Monarchy.

3 Violent Conflicts in the First and the Second Parliament

The debates of the Constitutionalists from the first Parliament show that rather than a parliamentary way of feeling and behaving, there is a sense of glorification of physical violence. Violence and counter-violence in Parliament was common even among Constitutionalists. A speech by Taqizadeh, the leader of one group of Constitutionalists during the first Parliament, reveals this attitude:

> We should not compare this Parliament with the two- or three-hundred year old parliaments of constitutional countries in which the government requires the parliaments only control and election (…). This Parliament can not start through conventional ways but must reform the country by an extraordinary force and an iron fist. (Adamiyat 1985, p. 366f.)

Thinking and acting in "either/or" categories inevitably forced many Constitutionalists to label their political opponents as absolute enemies. Subsequently, any form of mediation, compromise, consensus or reconciliation with those enemies was considered treason. The term "compromise" (*sâzesh*) belongs to the structural characteristic of any parliamentary form of government; as in the German language of the Weimar Republic, this term possessed in the Persian language a very negative connotation. It was quite often used in connection with the term "treason", regardless of whether it was about compromise with other Constitutionalists, or with the Shah and his allies (Ettehadieh 2002, pp. 212–216).

The assassination of Prime Minister Amin al-Soltan in August 1907, the bomb attack on Mohammad Ali Shah in February 1908, and the consequences that followed are among the most important events of this time and help to explain Mohammad Ali Shah's military attack on the Parliament and its eighteen-month-long closure. In this chapter, the focus is not on the customary recriminations, but rather on the comprehension of the dynamics that could only arise from the relationships of the groups involved. While it may satisfy some, it is not reality congruent to declare Mohammad Ali Shah solely responsible for these events, which has often been the case throughout the dominant historiography on Iran. It was not the bomb attack on Mohammad Ali Shah, but the position of Parliament regarding the prosecution of the perpetrators that played an important role in stoking the Shah's enmity towards the Constitutionalists. According to Mansoureh Ettehadieh, after the bombing, the Shah felt abandoned by Parliament (Ettehadieh 2002, p. 258). In a letter to the same Parliament nine days later, he complained of the slowness of the investigations and said he hoped to see results in the near future (Adamiyat 1992, p. 274). However, after the arrest of some people close to one sub-group of the Constitutionalists, known as the Radical Constitutionalists, different political associations and like-minded Constitutionalists protested. They explicitly called for the immediate release of the accused before any processing (Adamiyat 1992, p. 280). Under pressure, the Shah finally agreed to release the bombing suspects. However, his letter betrays his deep dissatisfaction and humiliation over the incident: "If the people do not want that I follow those who wanted to kill me, I renounce their persecution" (Reisnia 1981, p. 62).

In the three months between the bomb attack on him and his own attack on Parliament, Mohammad Ali Shah encountered a new round of threats, allegations and insults. For example, an article in the newspaper

ruh ol-qodos threatened Mohamad Ali Shah with a fate similar to that of Louis XVI, and to that of his assassinated former Prime Minister Amin al-Soltan.[3] An article in the same newspaper equated Aqa Abbas, the murderer of the Prime Minister, to Imam Ali, the first Imam of the Shiites (Saidi Sirjani 2004, p. 150). Perhaps the most problematic for the Shah was an article published in the newspaper *mosavat*. This led to one of the last tensions between him and the Radical Constitutionalists before his attack on the Parliament. This article questioned the moral virtue of the mother of the Shah, and accordingly, his succession (Dolatabadi 2008a, p. 664). Even though the Shah wanted to press charges against the director of this "liberal" newspaper, not only did he not participate in the trial but he was also mocked in the next issue on the court (Katouzian 2000, p. 73f.). In a public petition, signatures on a long piece of cloth apparently witnessed that Mohammad Ali Shah was not his father's son (Abadian 2006, p. 91). All that was defined under the slogan of "free speech", in a country in which, due to the long tradition of authoritarian rule, journalists have not learned the difference between appropriate criticism and personal insult.

After the assassination of Amin al-Soltan, no one succeeded in filling his intermediary role. This exasperated the already fragile trust between the Shah and the many members of the Parliament, so that their relationship became further strained (Sheikholeslami 1988, p. 24). If this group of Constitutionalists had possessed the parliamentary ability to anticipate the long-term consequences of their actions, they would have realized the negative potential consequences of Amin al-Soltan's assassination. Adamiyat, one of the historiographers of this time, criticized the "violence of the Radical Constitutionalists". He claimed the violent killing of this "pragmatic and capable mediator" ultimately harmed the Constitution. In his own language, he referred explicitly to the inability of this group of Radical Constitutionalists to be *civilized* and highlighted the habitual conditions of a parliamentary form of government:

> But the "Radicals" were too radical and too short-sighted in the reflection of this very important and nuanced issue to pursue a method that would have served the Parliament and practical reason. (Adamiyat 1992, p. 183)

The dangers for a parliamentary form of government of the Radicals' attitude can also be read in Talebof Tabrizi's letters. Nominated by the Radicals from Tabriz as a candidate for the new parliament, he rejected this nomination and wrote in a letter to Dehkhoda, his Radical friend:

> It is astounding that while in Iran the fight for freedom of opinion is going on, at the same time the opinion of others is not only being ignored but also there are those who are being condemned to death for expressing their opinions. (Aryanpour 1972, p. 291)

In another letter to the newspaper *anjoman*, Talebof warned the Radicals about the "immaturity of Constitutionalists" and "the dangers of a break-out of violence and anarchy":

Iranians were up to now caught by a two-horned cow of despotism, but soon, when they are unable to lead themselves, they will be confronted with a thousand-horned cow of the mobs. Then despots will laugh at our immaturity and our enemies will rejoice. (As they entered the Second Parliament, the Constitutionalists handled their conflicts in a similar way to their actions in the first Parliament (Aryanpour 1972, p. 291). The way they managed these conflicts led to a weakened central government. Forming a functioning government was almost impossible due to disputes and physical violence within the Parliament. The arguments between different camps of Constitutionalists always exerted a direct negative influence on the parliamentary assembled cabinets (Ettehadieh 2002, p. 483). The conflict with Russia and the subsequent three-year closure of the Parliament during the invasion of Iran by Russian troops could also have been prevented by a compromise, if habitual constraints had been aligned more strongly with a parliamentary orientation by an influential number of parliamentarians. In 1911, the American financial adviser W. Morgan Shuster was hired by the government to reform the financial system. After the Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1907, the Russians considered Northern Iran belonged to their zone of influence and opposed Shuster's decision to establish a *gendarmerie* led by English officers. Senior appointments of anti-Russian Democrats in this new armed force strengthened the resistance of the Russians against Shuster (Malekzadeh 1984, p. 1375ff.). A further incident also provoked the Russian occupation force. Shua al-Saltaneh, the brother of the exiled Mohammad Ali Shah, was one of the richest people in the country and an ardent supporter of Russia's political objectives in Iran. After his brother's failed coup, he was ordered by the Iranian government to relinquish his property as compensation to the government for the damage caused by the coup. Shuster was commissioned to carry out the seizure. The Russians felt obliged to support their allies and immediately sent troops to Bandar-e Anzali in the north of Iran to express their demands for compensation and an apology to Shua al-Saltaneh by the

Iranian government (Mostofi 2007, pp. 1285–1291). Finally, the hiring of two British citizens in the Russians' zone of influence and the intransigence of a large faction of Constitutionalists towards the Russians led to an ultimatum. The Russians demanded the immediate dismissal of Shuster and an official apology on the part of the Iranian government, threatening to invade Tehran if their demands were not met. Although the majority of the members of Parliament remained intransigent, the Cabinet took the threat seriously and called for the dismissal of Shuster (Ettehadieh 1996, p. 128). Some moderate Constitutionalists were also of the opinion that the country was too weak to stand up to the Russians. They pleaded in favour of a more pragmatic policy of rapprochement and friendship with the mighty neighbour (Ettehadieh 2002, p. 417). However, the majority of MPs, especially the Democrats, insisted on resisting and finally succeeded in gaining the upper hand in decision making in Parliament. The slogan "either death or independence" expressed their political attitude (Ettehadieh 2002, p. 405). During the invasion by Russian troops, members of the various parties and factions in Parliament formed a committee intending to propose possible solutions and make immediate decisions. One of the members of this committee reported the agreed-upon solution as follows:

> (…) after long talks, arguments and discussions we decided to act on the command of the excellent national poet Ferdowsi who says: "My body should not exist without Iran". Because we knew that the Russian government was not pursuing a different objective and purpose, except for the conquest of Iran and the destruction of its independence. [We made this decision] despite our knowledge that we are not able to fight against strong Russian forces and to throw them out of the country. We have chosen a death with honor over a life with shame. We decided to pay the price of resistance against oppression and injustice with our lives. Even when we fail to save the country, we can at least sacrifice our lives to it. (Malekzadeh 1984, p. 1460)[4]

This intransigent position on the part of some of the Constitutionalists, and even their willingness to put their lives on the line, is also reflected in the manner in which they addressed attempts to reach a compromise. They deemed individuals who supported Naser al-Molk and tried to make peace with the Russians "traitors". In a speech to "thousands of listeners" one of these Constitutionalists said:

> With the assurance that the war will lead to the victory of the enemy and our failure, we considered it better to let them destroy the country with resistance and sacrifice of its members. Thus, it will not be written in the history that the people of a nation of few thousand years old history with their dishonor and humiliation were not willing to let shed their blood for their honor and country. [It will not also be written that] they surrendered to the enemy in an unmanly fashion and gave away the country to them for nothing. (Malekzadeh 1984, p. 1512)

In Taqizadeh's letter to the Parliament, one can also discern his strong concern for their intransigence[5]:

> After much deliberations and investigations, I am amazed that you are dealing with the powerful enemy in these dangerous times so obstinately that the country is led into the abyss. What matters a little apology; do you not know about the history of the decline in other states or are not the ministers and the Parliament aware of their responsibility that they are working on the destruction of the country? They are sacrificing the independence of the nation because of their personal ambition and intentions. In the name of our nation and its independence, I beg you, convey my message to the Parliament. (Afshar 1993, p. 463)

4 The Development of the Need for a "Strong Man"

From late 1911 until the coup by Reza Khan in February 1921, the monopoly of force and taxation in Iran was mostly abolished. The government was unstable and disputes between the Constitutionalists in Parliament continued. The structural weakness of the central government during the Fourth Parliament in 1918 led to regional autonomy movements and rebellions. The indebted central government could no longer afford to pay the civil servants and soldiers (Bahar 2007a, p. 28). The continuing unrest and disorder in the country resulted in the desire for a strong central government on the part of many Iranians. The idea of a central government was that it would restore order, stability and security. Referring to this social desire, Bahar, who was an active member of the Democrats in Parliament, wrote the following:

> At this time, we realized that the central government should be given more power and that the government needs a foothold and the country should

> be given a resting point. In those days, we realized that a strong central government is much better than any of the rebellions and movements coming into existence for reforms in the regions. The central government should be helped. (Bahar 2007a, p. VIII–IX)

Bahar also pointed out a direct link between the lack of ability of being *civilized* by a major part of the Constitutionalists and the development of the desire for a strong central government:

> This was the idea of intelligent and perceptive stratum which had insight into the situation at that time. All wanted this. There was no other choice. We were ourselves, because of the rivalries, animosities and the shortsightedness of our friends, not able to form such a government. (Bahar 2007b, p. 101)

Some intellectuals even proposed a "just and enlightened despotism" as an alternative to the Parliamentary Monarchy. "The inability of the people to understand the Constitution" was mentioned as a reason for the appropriateness of this alternative (Hedayat 2006, p. 210). Hence, the idea of the coup was not a spontaneous decision by some politicians or foreign countries, as has often been suggested by others. The coup of 1921 was not an isolated act; it was closely related to social and political events before and during the Constitutional Monarchy. Even for many Constitutionalists a quick military solution to the problems seemed to be the best option. According to Hossain Makki, this idea appeared in the minds of many statesmen at that time (Makki 1995a, p. 146). Cleric Modarres, journalist Seyed Zia, tribal leader Sardar Asad, Qajar prince Nosrat al-Douleh and Cossack officer Staroselski also believed in a "quick military solution":

> In those days, the majority of the people were desperate about the change to disastrous conditions. There was a severe hopelessness in the hearts of sensitive people. The endless chaos and disorder, financial problems, feelings of humiliation and weak leadership continued. The situation forced the few people who kept their courage to search for solutions. A change through normal and legal channels seemed impossible; as an alternative they considered sudden and radical changes. Their eyes were fixed on the horizon, in the hope that suddenly an invisible hand would, at a single blow, tear out the rotten roots of the weak state and incompetent government. And even if it does not intent to bring wonder, it would at least guarantee security

> and keep away the hand of the bandits and rebels from the property, life and honor of the people. (Makki 1995a, p. 145f.)

Due to his personal strengths as well as his social position, Reza Kahn was able to offer a more appropriate response to the societal needs and desires of many Iranians than his rivals. From the beginning of the coup in February 1921 until his nomination as prime minister in October 1923, he acted as Minister of War in different unstable cabinets, bearing the military title Commander-in-chief (*sardâr-sepâh*). Within a short time he unified the Iranian armed forces under his leadership. The conflicts between different groups in the Fourth Parliament continued to play an important role in the weakening of the cabinets and in Reza Khan's increasing chance to take power, both as a person and because of his social and political positions in Iranian society (Makki 1995b, p. 336f.). Within a span of 17 years, from the Constitutional Revolution until Reza Khan became prime minister (1923), 30 unstable and weak governments were formed (Ettehadieh 1996, p. 28).

5 Reza Khan: From Premier Minister to a Monarch

Reza Khan's opportunities for power expanded as prime minister. He was able to overcome all others in power struggles and was gradually able to defy the Qajar dynasty. Through the abolition of the monarchy and the proclamation of a republic, Reza Khan intended to overcome another obstacle at the political level following his control over Parliament. He saw himself as the president of a republic much stronger than a prime minister under the command of a constitutional monarchy (Dolatabadi 2008b, pp. 1585–1591). However, the so-called "Republic Plan" failed, partly because of the poor organization of Reza Khan's supporters in Parliament in regard to its implementation. Reza Khan quickly rescinded the plan out for fear of continued protests led by some of the clerics who felt threatened by similar processes of secularization in Turkey; and Reza Khan left Teheran in protest (Sadr 1985, p. 282; Keddie 2008, p. 148). This event was reported in an article in the renowned newspaper *shâfâqe sorkh* entitled: "The Father of the Homeland is gone". In this editorial, Reza Khan's departure was equated with the return of the "differences of

opinion/word" (*ekhtelâf-e kalameh*),[6] the appearance of rebels, the collapse of Iranian loans, domestic unrest and the erasure of reform plans:

> The "commander-in-chief" [Reza Khan] is the father of our homeland. He is the model of manly spirit. He is the successor of the Iranian king, Ardeshir Babakan. He is Nader Shah Afshar. He is the strong leader of the patriots. This person should not go, even if the price means much bloodshed. He should return because the Iranian people love him. The eye of the 25 centuries of Iran's past history is looking at him. He should return. This is the nation's spirit that demands his return, through the pen of Red Twilight. Anyone who thinks otherwise is a traitor to the nation. What can be done? Today the commander-in-chief [Reza Khan] is the center of greatness, pride, independence and security of Iran. If he goes, all these things will go with him. (Ayn al-Saltaneh 2000, p. 6916)

Reza Khan's departure, however, was a political manoeuvre; he was brought back with full honour by prestigious members of Parliament because there was no other alternative. After the failure of the Republic Plan, Reza Khan and his supporters considered Monarchy Change the only alternative enabling complete centralization of all power and status in the country. Clerics saw this change as more Sharia-conforming than the implementation of a republic and therefore offered little resistance (Ghahari 2001, p. 209; Dolatabadi 2008b, pp. 1605–1606). The majority of parliamentarians and intellectuals, like Forughi, Davar and Aref, sympathized with Reza Khan and remained silent about the open violations of law by him and his followers. After the abolition of the Qajar dynasty, Reza Khan was able to put all of his potential rivals out of commission. Many old friends and followers who had stood up for the Monarchy Change were forced to resign from their positions (Hedayat 2006, p. 403). Some were murdered; others were imprisoned or placed under house arrest (Sadr 1985, pp. 363–383). Besides the army, Reza Khan's court also gained a decisive position within a hierarchically structured political system. The Court Minister in the newly created Ministry of Court was able to intervene in any political decision because other ministers were put under the direct control of this ministry (Dolatabadi 2008b, p. 1647). The functions of Parliament and the cabinets were reduced to carrying out the Shah's commands. In further elections it was ensured that only obedient people were let into Parliament (Dolatabadi 2008b, pp. 1640–1643). From the seventh Parliament, candidates for Parliament had to obtain the consent

of the Ministry of the Court before they could apply. Thus, elections in Iran became known as "ordered elections" (*entekhâbâte farmâyeshi*) (Dolatabadi 2008b, pp. 1644–1647).

In summary, it can be said that parliamentary forms of government belong to a later phase of state formation in a society (Elias 1996, p. 178). These forms of government are very closely associated with specific developments in the *personality structure* of the members of this society (Elias 1990, p. 8; 2004, pp. 173–174). Using the example of the development of Iranian society during the Constitutional Monarchy up to Reza Khan's rise to power, conflicts have been highlighted that arise from an asynchrony of development between institutional and habitual levels (Alikhani 2014). After a short phase of institutional democratization, these conflicts led in the counter-process direction: towards institutional de-democratization. Behaving according to non-violent parliamentary principles is not an intellectual decision that can simply be developed rationally in a short time. The development of peaceful patterns of behaviour and feeling at the personality level could take generations of learning and practising even under peaceful social and political conditions. This form of government is, as Oskar Negt put it: "The only politically constituted order that must be learned" (2010, p. 13). Every discontinuity and breaches at state and societal levels will impact on the personality structure of the people affected. An authoritarian and military state goes hand in hand with authoritarian and military social and personality structures. The so-called Constitutionalists in Iran between 1906 and 1925 were very closely connected with an autocratic and military state and societal structure, and were also less able to control their spontaneous emotions. They were not able to maintain the newly created parliamentary form of government by achieving compromises and giving mutual concessions, particularly with their opponents. This emotional inability was among other things due to the lack of civilizing ability to have foresight and exercise self-control, especially in time of crisis. These people were emotionally overwhelmed by new challenges, which were brought to them through a new form of a government in which communication and negotiation skills were much more valued and needed than physical fighting ability. Democratization at the institutional level could not last for a long time without these civilizing/habitual aspects of democratization. Thinking, feeling and behaving in either/or categories impelled the majority of Constitutionalists to a zero-sum game.

6 The Contemporary Relevance of This Topic

Recently, in some Middle Eastern countries, we have witnessed attempts at democratization and the implementation of democratic institutions. In the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq, which are both in a pre-nation-state phase of development, we are still observing violent struggles between different groups under weak parliamentary forms of government. Every group would not hesitate to eliminate other groups using physical violence. The emergence of ISIL in Iraq cannot be understood without taking into account the failure of the democratic political institutions, as they are monopolized by Shia groups who marginalize other groups. Under such circumstances, physical violence can become an important means of regulation of behaviour and feeling. Violence and counter-violence in turn could lead to further insecurity and increased fear:

> 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 gains a self-perpetuating and very often escalating power over the people, the opposing groups which constitute it, and becomes a trap forcing each of the participating sides, out of fear of the violence of the other side, to fight each other with violence. (Elias 1996, p. 216)

The only escape from this "double-bind trap" is the restoration of the old integration unit and its political apparatus, which better correspond to their personality structure.

The case of Egypt after the so-called Arab Spring is another revealing example of the importance of the habitual/civilizing aspects of democratization. Carriers of the uprising of 2011 played a significant role in the rise of power of El-Sisi as a "strong man" in July 2013. An elected president was replaced by a General in a coup. Not just pro-Morsi Islamists, but also so-called liberals, leftists and secular individuals contributed enormously to the dynamics of these processes of de-democratization after a successful revolution. Without the struggle between the Muslim Brotherhood government and the opposition, represented by the National Salvation Front and the Tamerod movement, the military would not easily have been able to carry out such a coup. There is in fact not usually such a big difference between the majority of the members of these groups and the majority of the Muslim Brothers in terms of their undemocratic patterns of action, conduct and emotion. The violent struggles between these groups seem to be more struggles for political power by all available means, even

violent ones, than for any specific democratic values. Otherwise, one cannot understand and explain why the military and its non-Islamist supporters could ally with the more radical Islamic Salafi Party Al-Nour rather than with more moderate Muslim Brothers.

Notes

1. Iran lost a relatively large part of its Northern territory in the First (1804–1813) and Second War (1826–1828) against Russia. The First War led to the Treaty of Gulistan, and the Second War to the Treaty of Turkmenchay, both to the disadvantage of Iran. The war between Great Britain and Iran, known as the Anglo-Persian War, took place from November 1856 to April 1857. The war resulted in Iran's withdrawal from the city of Herat (in today's Afghanistan) and the signing of the Treaty of Paris which surrendered Iran's claim to Herat. Great Britain considered the region around Herat a buffer zone against Russian expansion towards India.
2. Reza Khan after his coup in 1921 until the monarchy change in 1925 acted in different cabinets as minister of war or prime minister.
3. *Ruh ol-qodos*, no. 13, Saturday, November 5, 1907, pp. 1–3. quoted from: (Abadian 2006, p. 90). Louis XVI was deposed by revolutionaries in the French Revolution. Although largely considered incompetent and powerless, the king was nonetheless imprisoned and executed in 1793. His execution was a symbolic act, intended to signify the end of the monarchical system that Louis XVI represented (see Beetham 1991, p. 41).
4. They employed a similar strategy for dealing with conflicts a few years later. During the First World War, for example, they issued a statement in the journal *Kaveh* which called on the Iranian government to take a clear position against the Russians and the British. They did this despite the fact that the Iranian government was in no position to back such a stance against these major military powers. The same journal included the following remarks in January 1916: "Even if the old glorious Iran perished and died out, should it not die honorably? Is it worth to fall with shame and humiliation in the hands of wild Russians? Does it not cause shame for an Islamic government if it would idly capitulate to an eternal imprisonment of their religion's enemies? And finally, will other nations of the world pity and respect us in the slightest, in the event of such an idly decline of Iran?" (Ghahari 2001, p. 94).
5. Taqizadeh was forced to flee the country as a consequence of the shooting of one of the opposing parliamentary leaders, Ayatollah Behbahani. He was perceived by followers of Behbahani as the real mastermind behind this assassination. Taqizadeh is one of the most controversial political figures in

Iranian history. He radically changed his political ideology during his exile in Europe and the USA. In exile, he became more moderate and critical of his former party comrades. Homa Katouziyan divides the political life of Taqizadeh into three periods, which were very different from each other. According to him the first period ended at the age of 33/34, with his exile in 1911. The second period began with his exile and continued until the age of 56 in 1934, and the third period ended with his death at the age of 92 in 1970 (see Katouzian 2003).

6. The term "differences of opinion/word" still possesses negative connotations in the political language of many Iranians. Ayatollah Khomeini said, for example, in his speech after his return to Iran in February 1979 that "differences of opinion/word" would lead to the destruction of the country. In his other speeches he regularly praised "the unity of word" as an alternative concept for political action. The first concept is a structural characteristic of any kind of parliamentary government, the second represents an authoritarian way of resolving conflicts. In the second concept, any kind of difference of opinion and word between political actors is seen as a threat to the whole political system.

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by "n" refers to notes.

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