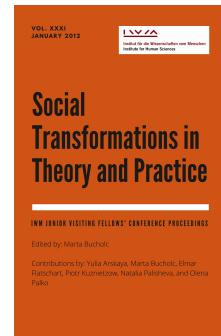


# Climbing the Stairs: On the Progress of Society and Science in Norbert Elias's Theory

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**Abstract:** *The metaphor of a population climbing the stairs of a tower was used by Norbert Elias to depict the development of human knowledge. I propose to interpret it as an image of progress, both of humanity as a whole and of science as a specialized, detached type of social knowledge. After commencing with a discussion of the roles played by metaphors in social sciences in general, I go on to decode the heuristic potential of the climbing picture, presenting certain aspects of Elias's philosophy of human relations and ethics of social sciences. I argue that Elias's approach may serve as a new picture of scientific and social progress, distinctly different from and independent of its Enlightenment and evolutionary predecessors, although resembling them in their optimism and belief in the controlling function of rationality.*

## Introduction – metaphors in social sciences

The title of this paper refers to a metaphor evoked by Norbert Elias in *On Time*[1], a book which he himself valued as highly as his *magnum opus*, *The Civilizing Process*, but in which he also appears, more than ever, to be a James Joyce of sociology[2]. I would like to discuss the picture of climbing the stairs as one of the most beautiful symbolic accounts of social life known to me. Its explanatory and generative power deserves, in my opinion, a thorough examination in the era called “late modernity”, when the ideas underpinning Elias's metaphor, such as progress, development, reflexivity and truth, have become subject to a reconsideration probably more radical than ever before. I would like to read the image of climbing the stairs as a dynamic picture of our times as well as a guideline allowing us to reset our thinking about human cognitive efforts (both individual and collective, scientific and everyday ones), moving it from a place in which it seems to have been stuck for almost a century. I take a metaphor as a starting point in the hope to avail

myself of its energy and liberating power, so often lacking in a dry object-level description, which is in my opinion the main rationale for our recurring to metaphors in our conceptual efforts.

Metaphors belong to the most efficient tools in social science and much could be said for writing its history from the point of view of shifting metaphors instead of shifting paradigms[3]. Indeed, the very nature of language as a metaphorical device is perhaps most clearly visible in the academic use of metaphors. There is no escape from them even in those domains of our intellectual activity in which we strive for the highest precision, fearing that the poetic element inherent in the metaphorical view of reality might lead us astray from the clear path of rational, systematic cognition. We shun the metaphors but are unable to stand up to our tasks without them and, in fact, volatile metaphors sometimes turn out to be the most durable and persistent products of scientific activity. Thus, it is all the more important to pay due attention to the manner in which we use them. It seems that, roughly speaking, two classes of cases come into question in this connection.

Firstly, we often seek help from a metaphor when trying to say something quickly instead of painstakingly clarifying the concepts and building an adequate terminological apparatus; the metaphor becomes a sort of intellectual shortcut or – to put it in a more elegant, Peircean way – an icon of a conceptual construction. Using a metaphor in this manner, we rely on one-to-one decoding by the addressees of our metaphorized message. I believe that among the metaphors frequently used in social science there are quite a few icon-type ones[4]. The intensity of our production in this respect does not seem to have diminished in recent days. Quite to the contrary: among the most prominent examples of such iconic metaphors in social sciences we find figures of relatively recent origin. Let me only mention a network (picturing certain properties of social interactions and configurations of social positions in various spheres), a liquid (employed to account for the fluidities in social relations and lack of marked limits and turning points in social life) and, of course, the revisited allegory of a globe[5].

Secondly, we use metaphors to indicate something which cannot (to the best of our belief) be put into words at all or cannot be contained in them completely. This inability to word something in a scholarly vernacular is in fact akin to a child's difficulty in saying something in "grown-up language". A scholar, just like a child, must (hopefully from time to time, at least) refer to a reality which is new and for which there is no ready expression in the language he or she commands. It may well be that an iconic analogy happens to suffice to indicate the properties of what is newly encountered – but quite frequently a more subtle device is called for. An iconic metaphor is a one-to-one assignment of the properties of reality to the properties of the icon in order to explain or visualize them better. However, there are moments when we not only wish to point out certain static analogies, but also the dynamics of the processes behind them, whose output is neither obvious nor finite. Such dynamic metaphors are by definition open-ended. The scholar using them may only wish to point out certain aspects of the metaphorized phenomenon,

but the generative power of the metaphor is such that it opens a way for novel interpretations, frequently inaccessible to its original author. A metaphor of this kind is an image in the proper sense of the word; it is a symbol in the Peircean sense[6].

The most prominent case of symbol-metaphor in intellectual history is Plato's cave, which by the way constitutes a paragon of the liberating, generative potential and interpretative open-endedness of any symbolic metaphor. Nevertheless, we may also find ample examples of this more advanced use of metaphors in contemporary social science. One of the most respectable sociological metaphors of that kind is Max Weber's iron cage of capitalism[7]. Personally, I am a great fan of the Cheerful Robot from Charles Wright Mills's *Sociological Imagination*[8]. The somewhat problematic sociological metaphor of "social capital" should also be borne in mind in this context (although in this case of an additional complication emerges due to the fact that the source domain of the metaphor is not everyday object-level language, but another social science, namely economics, which would make it a sort of second-order construct among scientific metaphors).

In Elias's writings, we find a few exquisite examples of such symbolic metaphors, famously including a dance (as an image of interdependence and orchestration of interacting social actors)[9] and a game[10] (used in a sense I find closely resembles the later Wittgensteinian one). The frequency of metaphorizing in his theory we owe to the independence and originality of his thinking. The quality and generative power of his metaphors probably spring from the same source as his highly original poetry, thus supporting the argument of those who – like myself – firmly believe that a poetic genius is as valuable in social sciences as the gift for observation. The story of climbing the tower obviously belongs to the realm of myth and poetry, but it would be a mistake to assume that such an affiliation deprives it of its citizenship in social science and philosophy.

In the following part of this article, I will show two uses to which Elias puts the image of a tower climb, the first being an illustration of the mechanisms of development of humanity as a whole and the second imaging the development of social science. I will then discuss the dynamics suggested by the metaphor in these two contexts and put it against the backdrop of reflection regarding social change in our times. I will argue that Elias's view may serve as an alternative approach to the reflective element inherent in late modernity, saving the idea of social progress from the ominous side-effects which are often said to have contaminated its use in social sciences.

## A steep way up

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Norbert Elias was one of the first sociologists ever to remark on the uselessness of hypostasizing artificial conceptual distinctions, which was typical of positivist sociology and its abstractly empirical branch[11]. In his sociology of process, the lack of what could be called terminological and methodological precision is remarkable. Whereas precision in this sense typically stems from fastidious differentiations and segregations of phenomena under consideration, Elias may safely be relied upon to have taken any viable option to treat things as aspects of one and the same phenomenon instead of separating them. He insisted that we should be careful not to tear into pieces what is in fact a whole,

even though in contemporary scientific reasoning this holistic approach must rely on analytical cognitive procedures[12]. This may well be taken as a sign of Elias's humble recognition of the complexity of social life and interdependence of its many levels and layers, which I hold to be a mark of a true classic. Incidentally, it is also one of the reasons why classical authors are often so difficult to read and so gratifying when we finally manage to get a grasp of their ideas: they never promise us that things would be simpler than they really are, but they usually do not make them unnecessarily difficult, either. This feature of Elias's style in general is clearly noticeable from his early writings onwards[13]. The greatest difficulty of studying social life he saw in the invariably situated nature of all human cognition (its relational character) as set against the universalist and objectivist claims of social science. The metaphor of climbing a tower is probably the best expression of his struggle to find a safe passage between the Scylla of involvement and the Charybdis of false detachment; I will discuss these two notions in detail in the next section.

Coming back to the metaphor: the core of the image is very simple. Let us imagine a tower, much like one usually featuring in fairy tales: high, stone walls crowned with an impressive battlement high up in the clouds, small windows set wide apart from one another. The interior of the tower is filled with winding stairs, here and there punctuated by a landing, from which the world outside may be seen through one of the small windows. A group of people are progressing from the bottom of the stairs. Theirs is not an easy climb. The stairs are steep and unyielding and the way from one window to another seems long enough for a whole generation to pass. Nevertheless, they carry with them the memories of their previous efforts and the stages on the way which they have already covered. Their progress is slow but constant, although when the population of climbers approaches the landing the desire to settle down becomes overwhelming. A day may come when it prevails and they end up making themselves as comfortable as it goes on some floor or other. It is also imaginable that they continue upwards endlessly (the top of the tower is most probably there somewhere, but it may be far enough never to be reached in their lifetime and beyond). The baggage of memory and the snapshots of the views from all the windows left behind will be carried along with them. They may also, as Elias suggests in *Time: An Essay*[14], reach the moment when the stairs give way (on the symbolic "hundredth floor"), and the population is forced to settle down. He believes that in such a case they will be naturally inclined to forget the way which has led them to the place they find themselves in, as though the very effort of climbing were an exercise of memory.

In a way, Elias's book on time as a whole may be read as an appeal not to forget where we come from in terms of the steps which have led us to the place where we are now. "Once they had learned it, however, members of these societies appear to forget that they had to learn the time. It is completely obvious to them", Elias writes[15]. Thereby, he sets the stage for coming to grips with our tendency to take the current state of social relations and knowledge for granted, calling special attention to the benefits of a constantly refreshed memory of their origins and legitimization, which may only be sustained by reflexivity. "The vain attempt to solve a problem as fundamentally simple as that of time is a food example of the consequences of forgetting the social past. By remembering it,

one discovers oneself”[16], he says with absolute certainty that knowledge of ourselves (both individually and collectively) is a hardly disputable value, for a human as well as for a scientist.

### **Climbing as a metaphor of scientific progress**

Let us first consider Elias’s metaphor as envisaging scientific development. Development in science consists in progressing from gaze to gaze as though from one tower floor to another, each subsequent gaze being situated (particularized) and related to a given stage of the climb. This perspective combines the objectivist view of science with the constructivist one, thus introducing fascinating dynamics of progressivism and culturalist relativism.

On the one hand, there is no reason to believe that the view from any one window is less accurate than from the one succeeding it: the latter is only more far-reaching and broader. Therefore, although science may proceed, it does not necessarily mean that every new view is cancelled or rendered null and void by its successor. The subsequent perspectives taken in the process of historical progress are complementary and not mutually exclusive. This might be seen as a somewhat simplistic continuation of the naïve accumulative approach – something that is quite surprising in an author writing after Thomas Kuhn. Although Elias claimed to have been resistant to „*all trends of fashion, whether Sartre, Wittgenstein, Popper, Parsons or Levi-Strauss*”[17], he never included Kuhn in that list, and there are no reasons to believe that Kuhn’s idea of paradigm shift would in fact be implausible for him. However, if we put aside some of the more far-fetched conclusions from the visual metaphor (such as the fact that we stop seeing certain objects provided that they are sufficiently far away, that the perception of colors and space also changes with distance, i.e. height, etc.), we must admit that Elias’s vision, being relationist in the Mannheimian sense, is at the same time cumulativist. Elias would thus appear to come to the rescue of the most precious, if the most criticized, aspect of the Enlightenment project as applied to scientific progress.

On the other hand, Elias does not make one particular mistake that is commonly committed in the Enlightenment tradition: he does not strive to overcome a certain perspective as such by means of objectivity in some quasi-neopositivist attempt; in other words, he does not wish to look at reality with the eyes of an allegedly impersonal science. Nor does he cherish the neo-Kantian ideals of objectifying the self-explaining explanatory gaze, which would deprive both the social scientist and the social actor of any reality whatsoever. Elias seems to believe in a holographic gaze, in which the final view is composed of many interfering gazes situated in the same referential framework, each of them being personal and not losing its relation to its bearer as a result of interaction with others. Climbing the stairs is a collective task, and transmitting memories of previous states of knowledge is a communicative process. Thereby the constructivist point is being made: knowledge is a product of interaction within a communicative community whose members share a common position in the historical process (they find themselves on the same storey of the tower), at the same time keeping their individuality and the uniqueness of their personal standpoint. What is negotiated in this communication is not a direct one-to-one reflection of the outside landscape, but a common vision based on the views of

various members of the scientific community. Ludwik Fleck's and Thomas Kuhn's categories of a 'collective style of thinking' and 'intellectual collective' might well be applicable to this aspect of Elias's philosophy of science.

### **Climbing the tower as a metaphor of progressing humanity**

Apart from applying the climbing metaphor to the progress of science, we may reflect on the broader possibilities of its interpretation, which are to a large extent rendered suspicious by the developments in 20th-century humanities and social sciences. For Elias, as for his teachers, Alfred Weber and Karl Mannheim, science was not yet a dangerous tool of instrumental reason, the ominous ally of dehumanization, which it would become later in the writings of Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and Jürgen Habermas. It is rather very much to the point to see scientific progress as a correlate (or even a collateral) of social change as it is commonly seen in the theory of civilization, its most apt presentation being perhaps Pitrim Sorokin's *Social and Cultural Dynamics*.

The parallelism and adequacy of scientific and social progress results directly from Elias's idea of thinking as socially situated in a figurational framework: if the framework is the same (which holds true of any historical moment), all kinds of thinking produced in the same figuration at the same time should show at least genetic similarities. This conclusion confirms the opinion that Elias's radicalism in socializing the cognizant subject went much further than that of any of his teachers or contemporaries[18]. It is one of the premises on which the epistemological dimension of the notion of civilization may be based, whose main consequence is the function of reflexivity in Elias's view of human development.

While we climb the spiral stairs of a tower, our view gradually becomes broader by subjecting our previous perspectives to reflection. At the same time, the level of civilization is rising. By submitting our previous patterns of behavior and norms of propriety to reflection we create new images of ourselves, and new constraints emerge both *in foro interno* and on the external platform of human relations. "The self-control agencies of a person, <reason> and <conscience> or however one might call them, are formed accordingly".[19] This way, we are able to gain distance from our former life on lower floors and proceed to a fuller and more coherent picture of the tower's surroundings and our own condition. Progress in this sense is only possible as long as we remember the lengths we have already covered and problematized in our thinking. This problematization may from time to time take the form of radical rejection, disgust and disdain directed against previous standards of civilized behavior, as shown in Elias's account of the evolution in table manners[20].

The crucial role of reflexivity directly opposes Elias's position to that of certain theorists of late modernity who claim our days to be unique by the force of the role reflexivity plays in our lives[21]. It is very likely that the postmodern condition may not exist without reflexivity, but it does not follow logically that in every other epoch before our own reflexivity was absent or drastically limited to a margin of intellectual deviation. In all probability, there are people in every society who act as specialized agents of reflection:

the Mannheimian *freischwebende Intelligentsia* is a structural concept. Nevertheless, Elias would not reserve reflexivity for any social group, although he does see a certain advantage to science as a carrier of reflexivity. This lies in his concept of detachment.

### **Development of knowledge: between involvement and detachment**

In the social sciences, it is sometimes taken for granted that the notion of truth perceived as adequacy of image and reality may only coexist with a strictly positivist theory of cognition and philosophy of science, whereas any element of constructivism automatically deprives the notion of truth of its normative effect and hence of any productivity. The very use of the metaphor of climbing the tower proves that Elias would not have accepted this false and simplistic axiom.

A true image of reality is produced in an effort of collective reflective assessment of formerly held beliefs, reproducing them in linguistic communication and gradually eliminating fantastic notions as more reality-congruent data make themselves available. This model may look like a 20<sup>th</sup>-century copy of Condorcet's dream of the Tenth Époque. However, Elias does not project this eliminative process as a finitist scheme in which humanity gradually reaches the level of pure or unsituated knowledge. On the contrary, as long as people live within social figurations, such unsituated knowledge is not attainable[22]. In fact, it would not even be desirable because a creature that lives alone, according to Aristotle's famous saying, must be either a beast or a god, having lost the most humane element of its nature, namely the susceptibility to being shaped by interaction with its fellow beings conducted by means of *logos*.

However, considering the issue of situated knowledge it is difficult to avoid the problem of truth. Elias's stance in this respect is somewhat complex. On the one hand, he clearly sees the distinction between truth and fallacy; this is evident in his usage of the term "fantasy" as referring to non-reality congruent pieces of our knowledge which we apply as props or supplements wherever truth is not attainable (for either purely epistemological or social reasons, including the exercise of power by other individuals in the figuration)[23]. Thus, the truth status of socially situated knowledge and the function of the category of truth become a mere derivate of the share of fantasy in the body of knowledge put to analysis. Therefore, truth is not a matter of knowing, but of speaking and thinking, which takes us far away from the area of definitions going under the heading of "justified true belief". On the other hand, however, Elias is not led to conclude that truth is a useless category in any descriptive sense. Truth remains for him a goal worth pursuing, although in order to achieve it a special attitude is necessary, which is very rarely realizable in everyday life and which he calls "detachment".

Detachment is characterized by Elias in contrast to a very different turn of mind, named "involvement". Both are to be found in every kind of knowledge, not only in science[24]. The relationship between the two is similar to the one described earlier by Max Weber between the ethic of responsibility and the ethic of ultimate ends (or: of convictions), although Elias would most probably perceive this distinction as too static and, as a consequence, inadequate[25]. Involvement is typical of everyday attitude and comprises an element of emotional attachment which gives knowledge as such a subjective turn and

makes it prone to representing reality in a mythical (fantastic) way[26]. An involved believer is not willing to abandon his or her beliefs on any testimony, including the proof of their falsity, as it is not truth that sustains such beliefs, but the strength of emotions, habits and personal engagement resulting from the figurational position of an individual and the historical situatedness of his or her worldview. That is the point of affinity to the Weberian ethic of ultimate ends insofar as the person concerned will act on his or her beliefs regardless of any reasoning to the contrary. Understandably enough, a certain degree of involvement is indispensable in everyday life in order to provide both the motivation and the automatism necessary to proceed with current affairs without excessive doubt and in a reliable manner. However, it also follows that involvement is a quality whose intensity may vary from very high to very low, nearing zero. A maximum level of involvement would equal fanaticism – the zero level would be a Kelvin zero of human action. Neither of these extremes is attainable in normal social conditions[27]. Such a zero point would be the point of absolute detachment.

Detachment is a condition of effective striving for the truth and, at the same time, of reflexivity applied to previous states of knowledge[28]. A detached person is able to give up views that have been proved wrong and is ready to put his or her beliefs to a test, as his or her thinking is object-oriented and therefore adequate to reality[29] (indeed I believe it would be more to the point to say that it is potentially reality congruent). This freedom from undue attachment to the current state of knowledge makes it possible to proceed from one phase of development to another, more advanced and comprehensive, with a conscience of contingency of both the outset and the point of arrival. This attitude is, of course, akin to the Weberian sense of limitation – or, to put it in a non-Weberian way, irony – inherent in the ethic of responsibility. Therefore, Elias's ethic of quest for the truth is a matter of the right balance between involvement and detachment.

Such a right balance allows the scientific community to climb the stairs of development. Modern science is not a domain of fully detached knowledge, but it operates concepts which are highly detached and reality congruent in the sense of being reliable in both reasoning and practice[30]. The climb consists in increasing this reality congruence, which of course means that the members of the scientific community must learn to control their natural proclivity to become involved in certain beliefs and to form involved, fantastic concepts instead of seeking the truth. In this point, the overall progress of humanity and the development of science converge: there is a correlation between the increase in human knowledge and in the standards of control of behavior in society. On this level, the correspondence between social and scientific improvement is established in a novel way, independent of old evolutionary or Enlightenment progressivist schemes, even though sharing some of their optimism.

## **Conclusion – towards a more self-possessed humanity**

Climbing up the stairs in order to reach a broader and more comprehensive view I have thus interpreted as progress towards a fuller control over human behavior. In social life in general, it is carried out by means of reflexivity and gradually putting the previous states of knowledge in perspective. Social science is largely responsible for accomplishing this



task, as it is a specialized agent of reflexivity. Science in turn may not discharge its social responsibility satisfactorily unless it reaches a sufficient level of detachment, which is a precondition of all reflexivity.

It should be noted that Elias's account of parallel human and scientific development should not be taken as a simple case of ethical intellectualism, according to which humans will become better as they become wiser thanks to the accomplishments of science. People do not necessarily become wiser as they become more self-controlled and reflective, as they know more and fantasize less. They just happen to get more reliable in the sense of their actions being easier to foresee and to coordinate. It may well be that it leads to a normative idea of a society liberated from all ideology, and exclusively based on the scientifically established rules of properly human social relationships[31]. If this were indeed to be the final stage of our journey as humanity, Elias's thinking would probably appear nearer to Mannheim's and Popper's social ideal than he himself would ever have admitted.

Be that as it may, the fact that coordination of behavior is rising alongside with the level of civilization is the reason why the higher the floor of the tower humanity is climbing, the easier we find it to form more complex, larger and internally interdependent figurations encompassing more integration levels and subtler power balances. The prerequisite to all these are the constraints imposed on individual emotions and behavior. This increase in the level of control does not make people better in any sense – it only makes them less directly violent, more prone to sublimation in the Freudian sense and easier to dominate. This way, the traces of early progressivist optimism, although obviously present in Elias's thought, do not shake the balance between involvement and detachment, allowing his theory to remain on the descriptive side.

We may easily find motifs of many social theories in Elias's views presented above, but to enumerate them would be an exercise in pure erudition in the very best of cases and in the free play of associations in the worst. Indeed, his position as a classic of sociological thought is a very special one. In him, we truly find the case of a single man trying to reconstruct the whole tradition as he goes along and becoming part of that tradition and at the same time one of its most ardent critics, his stance of an outsider gradually shifting into the status of a holy relic. My account of Elias's use of the metaphor of climbing the tower in order to present the core of his propositions regarding human progress as well as the ethics and mission of social science is by no means exhaustive. However, it is fair to say that these aspects of his thought are grossly underestimated, as much as the classical roots of sociology of knowledge in general[32]. I regret having subscribed to this bad usage to a point by neglecting the broader context of Elias's approach to positivism, social evolutionism and historicism, which is far from all the clichés omnipresent in contemporary discourse.

Every effort in science may be perceived as a step (be it an attempted or successful one) on our way up the stairs. We know what the climb means to us: it means less violence in everyday life, less uncompromised self-expression, more control and more culture as a source of Freud's *Unbehagen*. Nevertheless, we do not know what is to be found on the top of the tower – if the top is at all there. It is possible, after all, that we find the

happiness of humanity as a final product of our collective progress. Even if we do not, it does not change our destiny, neither as humans nor as scientists, as in any case – and this seems to be the ultimate creed of Elias – it is better to know more than to know less; for it is certainly desirable to get as close as possible to the truth about external reality and the human condition.

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*Notes:*

1. Elias, Norbert (1994) *Time: An Essay*, Oxford: Blackwell, 135.

2. Mennell, Stephen (1989) *Norbert Elias. Civilization and the human self-image*, Oxford: Blackwell, 210.

3. On metaphors in social sciences see Nisbet, Robert (1970) “Genealogy, Growth, and Other Metaphors”, *New Literary History*, vol. 1, no. 3, *History and Fiction* (Spring), 351-363.

4. Cf. Bal, Mieke (2002) *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: a Rough Guide*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

5. I refer to the metaphors extensively employed by, respectively, Manuel Castells, Zygmunt Bauman and Peter Sloterdijk.

6. Bal, Mieke (2002) *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities*.

7. Cf. Baehr, Peter (2001) “The <Iron Cage> and the <Shell Hard as Steel>”, *History and Theory*, 40 (May), 153-169.

8. Mills, Charles Wright (2000) *The Sociological Imagination*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

9. Cf. Marody, Mirosława (2008) „Między zaangażowaniem a neutralnością: O socjologii Norberta Eliasa”, in: *Społeczność jednostek*, trans. Janusz Stawiński, Warsaw: PWN, VII-XLIII, XXVI.
10. Elias, Norbert (1998) “Game Models”, in: *On Civilization, Power and Knowledge*, ed. Stephen Mennell, Johan Goulsblom, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 113-138, 121.
11. Cf. Mills, Charles Wright (2000) *The Sociological Imagination*.
12. Cf. Merz-Benz, Peter-Ulrich (1996) “Verstrickt in Geschichte. Norbert Elias in seiner Breslauer Zeit”, in: *Norbert Elias und die Menschenwissenschaften. Studien zur Entstehung und Wirkungsgeschichte seines Werkes*, ed. Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 48.
13. Ibidem, 49ff.
14. Elias, Norbert (1994) *Time: An Essay*, Oxford: Blackwell, 135.
15. Ibidem, 139.
16. Ibidem, 135.
17. After Mennell, Stephen (1989) *Norbert Elias. Civilization and the human self-image*, Oxford: Blackwell, 8.
18. Cf. Merz-Benz, Peter-Ulrich (1996) “Verstrickt in Geschichte. Norbert Elias in seiner Breslauer Zeit”, 46ff.
19. Elias, Norbert (1994) *Time: An Essay*, 139.
20. Elias, Norbert (2000) *The Civilizing Process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Oxford: Blackwell, 72-107.
21. E.g., Giddens, *Modernity and Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Cambridge: Polity 1991.
22. Elias, Norbert (1998) “Involvement and Detachment”, in: *On Civilization, Power and Knowledge*, ed. Stephen Mennell, Johan Goulsblom, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 217-248, 217.
23. Elias, Norbert (1991) *The Symbol Theory*, London: Sage.
24. Mennell, Stephen (1989) *Norbert Elias. Civilization and the human self-image*, 160.
25. Ibidem.
26. Cf. Elias, Norbert (1998) “Involvement and Detachment”, 221.
27. Ibidem, 217.

28. Ibidem, 221.

29. Mennell, Stephen (1989) *Norbert Elias. Civilization and the human self-image*, 160.

30. Ibidem, 161.

31. Merz-Benz, Peter-Ulrich (1996) “Verstrickt in Geschichte. Norbert Elias in seiner Breslauer Zeit”, 45.

32. Cf. Arditi, Jorge/ Swidler, Ann (1994), “The New Sociology of Knowledge”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 20, 305-306.

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